

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture

New Testament IVa

John 1-10

Edited by
Joel C. Elowsky

General Editor
Thomas C. Oden

Praise for the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture

"The conspectus of patristic exposition that this series offers has been badly needed for several centuries, and the whole Christian world should unite to thank those who are undertaking to fill the gap. For the ongoing ecumenical conversation, and the accurate appreciation of early Christian thought, and the current hermeneutical debate as well, the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture will prove itself to be a really indispensable resource."

J. I. Packer
Board of Governors Professor of Theology
Regent College

"In the desert of biblical scholarship that tries to deconstruct or get behind the texts, the patristic commentators let the pure, clear waters of Christian faith flow from its scriptural source. Preachers, teachers and Bible students of every sort will want to drink deeply from the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture."

Richard John Neuhaus
President, Religion and Public Life
Editor-in-Chief, First Things

"The fathers of the ancient church were enabled, by the grace of God, to interpret the divine Scriptures in a way that integrates spirituality and erudition, liturgy and dogma, and generally all aspects of our faith which embrace the totality of our life. To allow the fathers to speak to us again, in our contemporary situation, in the way that you have proposed in your project, provides a corrective to the fragmentation of the faith which results from the particularization and overspecialization that exists today in the study of the Holy Bible and of sacred theology."

Fr. George Dragas
Holy Cross Seminary

"This new but old Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture takes us out of the small, closed-minded world in which much modern biblical scholarship is done into an earlier time marked by a Christian seriousness, by robust inquiry and by believing faith. This Commentary is a fresh breeze blowing in our empty, postmodern world."

David F. Wells
Andrew Mutch Distinguished Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Praise for the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture

"The conspectus of patristic exposition that this series offers has been badly needed for several centuries, and the whole Christian world should unite to thank those who are undertaking to fill the gap. For the ongoing ecumenical conversation, and the accurate appreciation of early Christian thought, and the current hermeneutical debate as well, the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture will prove itself to be a really indispensable resource."

J. I. Packer
Board of Governors Professor of Theology
Regent College

"In the desert of biblical scholarship that tries to deconstruct or get behind the texts, the patristic commentators let the pure, clear waters of Christian faith flow from its scriptural source. Preachers, teachers and Bible students of every sort will want to drink deeply from the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture."

Richard John Neuhaus
President, Religion and Public Life
Editor-in-Chief, First Things

"The fathers of the ancient church were enabled, by the grace of God, to interpret the divine Scriptures in a way that integrates spirituality and erudition, liturgy and dogma, and generally all aspects of our faith which embrace the totality of our life. To allow the fathers to speak to us again, in our contemporary situation, in the way that you have proposed in your project, provides a corrective to the fragmentation of the faith which results from the particularization and overspecialization that exists today in the study of the Holy Bible and of sacred theology."

Fr. George Dragas
Holy Cross Seminary

"This new but old Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture takes us out of the small, closed-minded world in which much modern biblical scholarship is done into an earlier time marked by a Christian seriousness, by robust inquiry and by believing faith. This Commentary is a fresh breeze blowing in our empty, postmodern world."

David F. Wells
Andrew Mutch Distinguished Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

"Composed in the style of the great medieval *catenae,* this new anthology of patristic commentary on Holy Scripture, conveniently arranged by chapter and verse, will be a valuable resource for prayer, study and proclamation. By calling attention to the rich Christian heritage preceding the separations between East and West and between Protestant and Catholic, this series will perform a major service to the cause of ecumenism."

Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.
Laurence J. McGinley Professor of Religion and Society
Fordham University

"The initial cry of the Reformation was *ad fontes*—back to the sources! The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture is a marvelous tool for the recovery of biblical wisdom in today's church. Not just another scholarly project, the ACCS is a major resource for the renewal of preaching, theology and Christian devotion."

Timothy George
Dean, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

"Modern church members often do not realize that they are participants in the vast company of the communion of saints that reaches far back into the past and that will continue into the future, until the kingdom comes. This Commentary should help them begin to see themselves as participants in that redeemed community."

Elizabeth Achtemeier
Union Professor Emerita of Bible and Homiletics
Union Theological Seminary in Virginia

"Contemporary pastors do not stand alone. We are not the first generation of preachers to wrestle with the challenges of communicating the gospel. The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture puts us in conversation with our colleagues from the past, that great cloud of witnesses who preceded us in this vocation. This Commentary enables us to receive their deep spiritual insights, their encouragement and guidance for present-day interpretation and preaching of the Word. What a wonderful addition to any pastor's library!"

William H. Willimon
Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry
Duke University

"Here is a nonpareil series which reclaims the Bible as the book of the church by making accessible to earnest readers of the twenty-first century the classrooms of Clement of Alexandria and Didymus the Blind, the study and lecture hall of Origen, the cathedrae of Chrysostom and Augustine, the scriptorium of Jerome in his Bethlehem monastery."

George Lawless
Augustinian Patristic Institute and Gregorian University, Rome

"We are pleased to witness publication of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. It is most beneficial for us to learn how the ancient Christians, especially the saints of the church who proved through their lives their devotion to God and his Word, interpreted Scripture. Let us heed the witness of those who have gone before us in the faith."

Metropolitan Theodosius
Primate, Orthodox Church in America

"Across Christendom there has emerged a widespread interest in early Christianity, both at the popular and scholarly level. . . . Christians of all traditions stand to benefit from this project, especially clergy and those who study the Bible. Moreover, it will allow us to see how our traditions are both rooted in the scriptural interpretations of the church fathers while at the same time seeing how we have developed new perspectives."

Alberto Ferreiro
Professor of History, Seattle Pacific University

"The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture fills a long overdue need for scholars and students of the church fathers. . . . Such information will be of immeasurable worth to those of us who have felt inundated by contemporary interpreters and novel theories of the biblical text. We welcome some 'new' insight from the ancient authors in the early centuries of the church."

H. Wayne House
Professor of Theology and Law
Trinity University School of Law

"Chronological snobbery—the assumption that our ancestors working without benefit of computers have nothing to teach us—is exposed as nonsense by this magnificent new series. Surfeited with knowledge but starved of wisdom, many of us are more than ready to sit at table with our ancestors and listen to their holy conversations on Scripture. I know I am."

Eugene H. Peterson
Professor Emeritus of Spiritual Theology
Regent College

"Few publishing projects have encouraged me as much as the recently announced Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture with Dr. Thomas Oden serving as general editor. . . . How is it that so many of us who are dedicated to serve the Lord received seminary educations which omitted familiarity with such incredible students of the Scriptures as St. John Chrysostom, St. Athanasius the Great and St. John of Damascus? I am greatly anticipating the publication of this Commentary."

Fr. Peter E. Gillquist
Director, Department of Missions and Evangelism
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

"The Scriptures have been read with love and attention for nearly two thousand years, and listening to the voice of believers from previous centuries opens us to unexpected insight and deepened faith. Those who studied Scripture in the centuries closest to its writing, the centuries during and following persecution and martyrdom, speak with particular authority. The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture will bring to life the truth that we are invisibly surrounded by a 'great cloud of witnesses.'"

Frederica Mathewes-Green
Commentator, National Public Radio

"For those who think that church history began around 1941 when their pastor was born, this Commentary will be a great surprise. Christians throughout the centuries have read the biblical text, nursed their spirits with it and then applied it to their lives. These commentaries reflect that the witness of the Holy Spirit was present in his church throughout the centuries. As a result, we can profit by allowing the ancient Christians to speak to us today."

Haddon Robinson
Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor of Preaching
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

"All who are interested in the interpretation of the Bible will welcome the forthcoming multivolume series Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Here the insights of scores of early church fathers will be assembled and made readily available for significant passages throughout the Bible and the Apocrypha. It is hard to think of a more worthy ecumenical project to be undertaken by the publisher."

Bruce M. Metzger
Professor of New Testament, Emeritus
Princeton Theological Seminary

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture

New Testament

IVa

John 1-10

Edited by

Joel C. Elowsky

General Editor

Thomas C. Oden

IVP Academic

An imprint of InterVarsity Press

Downers Grove, Illinois

InterVarsity Press
P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515-1426
Internet: www.ivpress.com
E-mail: email@ivpress.com

InterVarsity Press® is the book-publishing division of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA®, a movement of students and faculty active on campus at hundreds of universities, colleges and schools of nursing in the United States of America, and a member movement of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. For information about local and regional activities, write Public Relations Dept., InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, 6400 Schroeder Rd., P.O. Box 7895, Madison, WI 53707-7895, or visit the IVCF website at <www.intervarsity.org>.

Cover photograph: Interior of the Apse, 6th century (photo)/San Vitale, Ravanna, Italy/Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library.

Any internal page references refer to page numbers in the print edition.

ISBN 978-0-8308-9745-2 (digital)
ISBN 978-0-8308-1489-3 (print)

Ancient Christian Commentary Project Research Team

General Editor

Thomas C. Oden

Associate Editor

Christopher A. Hall

Operations Manager and Translations Project Coordinator

Joel Elowsky

Research and Acquisitions Director

Michael Glerup

Editorial Services Director

Warren Calhoun Robertson

Original Language Version Director

Konstantin Gavrilkin

Graduate Research Assistants

Mark Bilby
Thomas Buchan
Jeffrey Finch
Steve Finlan
Grant Gieseke
J. Sergius Halvorsen
Patricia Ireland
Alexei Khamine
Vladimir Kharlamov
Hsueh-Ming Liao
Kevin M. Lowe
Michael Nausner
Baek-Yong Sung
Elena Vishnevskaya
Jeffery Wittung

Administrative Assistant

Judy Cincotta

Contents

PUBLISHER'S NOTE REGARDING THIS DIGITAL EDITION

Due to limitations regarding digital rights, the RSV Scripture text is linked to but does not appear in this digital edition of this Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture volume as it does in the print edition. Page numbering has been maintained, however, to match the print edition. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

General Introduction

The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (hereafter ACCS) is a twenty-eight volume patristic commentary on Scripture. The patristic period, the time of the fathers of the church, spans the era from Clement of Rome (fl. c. 95) to John of Damascus (c. 645-c. 749). The commentary thus covers seven centuries of biblical interpretation, from the end of the New Testament to the mid-eighth century, including the Venerable Bede.

Since the method of inquiry for the ACCS has been developed in close coordination with computer technology, it serves as a potential model of an evolving, promising, technologically pragmatic, theologically integrated method for doing research in the history of exegesis. The purpose of this general introduction to the series is to present this approach and account for its methodological premises.

This is a long-delayed assignment in biblical and historical scholarship: reintroducing in a convenient form key texts of early Christian commentary on the whole of Scripture. To that end, historians, translators, digital technicians, and biblical and patristic scholars have collaborated in the task of presenting for the first time in many centuries these texts from the early history of Christian exegesis. Here the interpretive glosses, penetrating reflections, debates, contemplations and deliberations of early Christians are ordered verse by verse from Genesis to Revelation. Also included are patristic comments on the deuterocanonical writings (sometimes called the Apocrypha) that were considered Scripture by the Fathers. This is a full-scale classic commentary on Scripture consisting of selections in modern translation from the ancient Christian writers.

The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture has three goals: the renewal of Christian *preaching* based on classical Christian exegesis, the intensified study of Scripture by *lay* persons who wish to think with the early church about the canonical text, and the stimulation of Christian historical, biblical, theological and pastoral *scholarship* toward further inquiry into the scriptural interpretations of the ancient Christian writers.

On each page the Scripture text is accompanied by the most noteworthy remarks of key consensual exegetes of the early Christian centuries. This formal arrangement follows approximately the traditional pattern of the published texts of the Talmud after the invention of printing and of the *glossa ordinaria* that preceded printing.[1]

[1] Students of the Talmud will easily recognize this pattern of organization. The Talmud is a collection of rabbinic arguments, discussions and comments on the Mishnah, the first Jewish code of laws after the Bible, and the Gemara, an elaboration of the Mishnah. The study of Talmud is its own end and reward. In the Talmud every subject pertaining to Torah is worthy of consideration and analysis. As the Talmud is a vast repository of Jewish wisdom emerging out of revealed Scripture, so are the Fathers the repository of Christian wisdom

Retrieval of Neglected Christian Texts

There is an emerging felt need among diverse Christian communities that these texts be accurately recovered and studied. Recent biblical scholarship has so focused attention on post-Enlightenment historical and literary methods that it has left this longing largely unattended and unserviced.

After years of quiet gestation and reflection on the bare idea of a patristic commentary, a feasibility consultation was drawn together at the invitation of Drew University in November 1993 in Washington, D.C. This series emerged from that consultation and its ensuing discussions. Extensive further consultations were undertaken during 1994 and thereafter in Rome, Tübingen, Oxford, Cambridge, Athens, Alexandria and Istanbul, seeking the advice of the most competent international scholars in the history of exegesis. Among distinguished scholars who contributed to the early layers of the consultative process were leading writers on early church history, hermeneutics, homiletics, history of exegesis, systematic theology and pastoral theology. Among leading international authorities consulted early on in the project design were Sir Henry Chadwick of Oxford; Bishops Kallistos Ware of Oxford, Rowan Williams of Monmouth and Stephen Sykes of Ely (all former patristics professors at Oxford or Cambridge); Professors Angelo Di Berardino and Basil Studer of the Patristic Institute of Rome; and Professors Karlfried Froehlich and Bruce M. Metzger of Princeton. They were exceptionally helpful in shaping our list of volume editors. We are especially indebted to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew and Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Vatican, for their blessing, steady support, and wise counsel in developing and advancing the Drew University Patristic Commentary Project.

The outcome of these feasibility consultations was general agreement that the project was profoundly needed, accompanied by an unusual eagerness to set out upon the project, validated by a willingness on the part of many to commit valuable time to accomplish it. At the pace of three or four volumes per year, the commentary is targeted for completion within the first decade of the millennium.

This series stands unapologetically as a practical homiletic and devotional guide to the earliest layers of classic Christian readings of biblical texts. It intends to be a brief compendium of reflections on particular Septuagint, Old Latin and New Testament texts by their earliest Christian interpreters. Hence it is not a commentary by modern standards, but it is a commentary by the standards of those who anteceded and formed the basis of the modern commentary.

emerging out of revealed Scripture. The Talmud originated largely from the same period as the patristic writers, often using analogous methods of interpretation. In the Talmud the texts of the Mishnah are accompanied by direct quotations from key consensual commentators of the late Judaic tradition. The format of the earliest published versions of the Talmud itself followed the early manuscript model of the medieval glossa ordinaria in which patristic comments were organized around Scripture texts. Hence the ACCS gratefully acknowledges its affinity and indebtedness to the early traditions of the catena and glossa ordinaria and of the tradition of rabbinic exegesis that accompanied early Christian Scripture studies.

Many useful contemporary scholarly efforts are underway and are contributing significantly to the recovery of classic Christian texts. Notable in English among these are the Fathers of the Church series (Catholic University of America Press), Ancient Christian Writers (Paulist), Cistercian Studies (Cistercian Publications), The Church's Bible (Eerdmans), Message of the Fathers of the Church (Michael Glazier, Liturgical Press) and Texts and Studies (Cambridge). In other languages similar efforts are conspicuously found in Sources Chrétiennes, Corpus Christianorum (Series Graeca and Latina), Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, Patrologia Orientalis, Patrologia Syriaca, Biblioteca patristica, Les Pères dans la foi, Collana di Testi Patristici, Letture cristiane delle origini, Letture cristiane del primo millennio, Cultura cristiana antica, Thesaurus Linguae Latinae, Thesaurus Linguae Graecae and the Cetedoc series, which offers in digital form the volumes of Corpus Christianorum. The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture builds on the splendid work of all these studies, but focuses primarily and modestly on the recovery of patristic biblical wisdom for contemporary preaching and lay spiritual formation.

Digital Research Tools and Results

The volume editors have been supported by a digital research team at Drew University which has identified these classic comments by performing global searches of the Greek and Latin patristic corpus. They have searched for these texts in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG) digitalized Greek database, the Cetedoc edition of the Latin texts of Corpus Christianorum from the Centre de traitement électronique des documents (Université catholique de Louvain), the Chadwyck-Healey Patrologia Latina Database (Migne) and the Packard Humanities Institute Latin databases. We have also utilized the CD-ROM searchable version of the Early Church Fathers, of which the Drew University project was an early cosponsor along with the Electronic Bible Society.

This has resulted in a plethora of raw Greek and Latin textual materials from which the volume editors have made discriminating choices.[2] In this way the project office has already supplied to each volume editor[3] a substantial read-out of Greek and Latin glosses, explanations, observations and comments on each verse or pericope of Scripture text.[4] Only a small percentage of this raw material has in fact made the grade of our selection criteria. But such is the poignant work of

[2]Having searched Latin and Greek databases, we then solicited from our Coptic, Syriac and Armenian editorial experts selections from these bodies of literature, seeking a fitting balance from all available exegetical traditions of ancient Christianity within our time frame. To all these we added the material we could find already in English translation.

[3]Excepting those editors who preferred to do their own searching.

[4]TLG and Cetedoc are referenced more often than Migne or other printed Greek or Latin sources for these reasons: (1) the texts are more quickly and easily accessed digitally in a single location; (2) the texts are more reliable and in a better critical edition; (3) we believe that in the future these digital texts will be far more widely accessed both by novices and specialists; (4) short selections can be easily downloaded; and (5) the context of each text can be investigated by the interested reader.

the catenist, or of any compiler of a compendium for general use. The intent of the exercise is to achieve brevity and economy of expression by exclusion of extraneous material, not to go into critical explanatory detail.

Through the use of Boolean key word and phrase searches in these databases, the research team identified the Greek and Latin texts from early Christian writers that refer to specific biblical passages. Where textual variants occur among the Old Latin texts or disputed Greek texts, they executed key word searches with appropriate or expected variables, including allusions and analogies. At this time of writing, the Drew University ACCS research staff has already completed most of these intricate and prodigious computer searches, which would have been unthinkable before computer technology.

The employment of these digital resources has yielded unexpected advantages: a huge residual database, a means of identifying comments on texts not previously considered for catena usage, an efficient and cost-effective deployment of human resources, and an abundance of potential material for future studies in the history of exegesis. Most of this was accomplished by a highly talented group of graduate students under the direction of Joel Scandrett, Michael Glerup and Joel Elowsky. Prior to the technology of digital search and storage techniques, this series could hardly have been produced, short of a vast army of researchers working by laborious hand and paper searches in scattered libraries around the world.

Future readers of Scripture will increasingly be working with emerging forms of computer technology and interactive hypertext formats that will enable readers to search out quickly in more detail ideas, texts, themes and terms found in the ancient Christian writers. The ACCS provides an embryonic paradigm for how that can be done. Drew University offers the ACCS to serve both as a potential research model and as an outcome of research. We hope that this printed series in traditional book form will in time be supplemented with a larger searchable, digitized version in some stored-memory hypertext format. We continue to work with an astute consortium of computer and research organizations to serve the future needs of both historical scholarship and theological study.

The Surfeit of Materials Brought to Light

We now know that there is virtually no portion of Scripture about which the ancient Christian writers had little or nothing useful or meaningful to say. Many of them studied the Bible thoroughly with deep contemplative discernment, comparing text with text, often memorizing large portions of it. All chapters of all sixty-six books of the traditional Protestant canonical corpus have received deliberate or occasional patristic exegetical or homiletic treatment. This series also includes patristic commentary on texts not found in the Jewish canon (often designated the Apocrypha or deuterocanonical writings) but that were included in ancient Greek Bibles (the Septuagint). These texts, although not precisely the same texts in each tradition, remain part of the recognized canons of the

Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions.

While some books of the Bible are rich in verse-by-verse patristic commentaries (notably Genesis, Psalms, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Matthew, John and Romans), there are many others that are lacking in intensive commentaries from this early period. Hence we have not limited our searches to these formal commentaries, but sought allusions, analogies, cross-connections and references to biblical texts in all sorts of patristic literary sources. There are many perceptive insights that have come to us from homilies, letters, poetry, hymns, essays and treatises, that need not be arbitrarily excluded from a catena. We have searched for succinct, discerning and moving passages both from line-by-line commentaries (from authors such as Origen, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyr, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine and Bede) and from other literary genres. Out of a surfeit of resulting raw materials, the volume editors have been invited to select the best, wisest and most representative reflections of ancient Christian writers on a given biblical passage.

For Whom Is This Compendium Designed?

We have chosen and ordered these selections primarily for a general lay reading audience of nonprofessionals who study the Bible regularly and who earnestly wish to have classic Christian observations on the text readily available to them. In vastly differing cultural settings, contemporary lay readers are asking how they might grasp the meaning of sacred texts under the instruction of the great minds of the ancient church.

Yet in so focusing our attention, we are determined not to neglect the rigorous requirements and needs of academic readers who up to now have had starkly limited resources and compendia in the history of exegesis. The series, which is being translated into the languages of half the world's population, is designed to serve public libraries, universities, crosscultural studies and historical interests worldwide. It unapologetically claims and asserts its due and rightful place as a staple source book for the history of Western literature.

Our varied audiences (lay, pastoral and academic) are much broader than the highly technical and specialized scholarly field of patristic studies. They are not limited to university scholars concentrating on the study of the history of the transmission of the text or to those with highly focused interests in textual morphology or historical-critical issues and speculations. Though these remain crucial concerns for specialists, they are not the paramount interest of the editors of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Our work is largely targeted straightaway for a pastoral audience and more generally to a larger audience of laity who want to reflect and meditate with the early church about the plain sense, theological wisdom, and moral and spiritual meaning of particular Scripture texts.

There are various legitimate competing visions of how such a patristic commentary should be developed, each of which were carefully pondered in our feasibility study and its follow-up. With

high respect to alternative conceptions, there are compelling reasons why the Drew University project has been conceived as a practically usable commentary addressed first of all to informed lay readers and more broadly to pastors of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Only in an ancillary way do we have in mind as our particular audience the guild of patristic academics, although we welcome their critical assessment of our methods. If we succeed in serving lay and pastoral readers practically and well, we expect these texts will also be advantageously used by college and seminary courses in Bible, hermeneutics, church history, historical theology and homiletics, since they are not easily accessible otherwise.

The series seeks to offer to Christian laity what the Talmud and Midrashim have long offered to Jewish readers. These foundational sources are finding their way into many public school libraries and into the obligatory book collections of many churches, pastors, teachers and lay persons. It is our intent and the publishers' commitment to keep the whole series in print for many years to come and to make it available on an economically viable subscription basis.

There is an emerging awareness among Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox laity that vital biblical preaching and teaching stand in urgent need of some deeper grounding beyond the scope of the historical-critical orientations that have dominated and at times eclipsed biblical studies in our time.

Renewing religious communities of prayer and service (crisis ministries, urban and campus ministries, counseling ministries, retreat ministries, monasteries, grief ministries, ministries of compassion, etc.) are being drawn steadily and emphatically toward these biblical and patristic sources for meditation and spiritual formation. These communities are asking for primary source texts of spiritual formation presented in accessible form, well-grounded in reliable scholarship and dedicated to practical use.

The Premature Discrediting of the Catena Tradition

We gratefully acknowledge our affinity and indebtedness to the spirit and literary form of the early traditions of the catena and *glossa ordinaria* that sought authoritatively to collect salient classic interpretations of ancient exegetes on each biblical text. Our editorial work has benefited by utilizing and adapting those traditions for today's readers.

It is regrettable that this distinctive classic approach has been not only shelved but peculiarly misplaced for several centuries. It has been a long time since any attempt has been made to produce this sort of commentary. Under fire from modern critics, the catena approach dwindled to almost nothing by the nineteenth century and has not until now been revitalized in this postcritical situation. Ironically, it is within our own so-called progressive and broad-minded century that these texts have been more systematically hidden away and ignored than in any previous century of Christian scholarship. With all our historical and publishing competencies, these texts have been regrettably denied to hearers of Christian preaching in our time, thus revealing the dogmatic biases of moder-

nity (modern chauvinism, naturalism and autonomous individualism).

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century exegesis has frequently displayed a philosophical bias toward naturalistic reductionism. Most of the participants in the ACCS project have lived through dozens of iterations of these cycles of literary and historical criticism, seeking earnestly to expound and interpret the text out of ever-narrowing empiricist premises. For decades Scripture teachers and pastors have sailed the troubled waters of assorted layers and trends within academic criticism. Preachers have attempted to digest and utilize these approaches, yet have often found the outcomes disappointing. There is an increasing awareness of the speculative excesses and the spiritual and homiletic limitations of much post-Enlightenment criticism.

Meanwhile the motifs, methods and approaches of ancient exegetes have remained shockingly unfamiliar not only to ordained clergy but to otherwise highly literate biblical scholars, trained exhaustively in the methods of scientific criticism. Amid the vast exegetical labors of the last two centuries, the ancient Christian exegetes have seldom been revisited, and then only marginally and often tendentiously. We have clear and indisputable evidence of the prevailing modern contempt for classic exegesis, namely that the extensive and once authoritative classic commentaries on Scripture still remain untranslated into modern languages. Even in China this has not happened to classic Buddhist and Confucian commentaries.

This systematic modern scholarly neglect is seen not only among Protestants, but also is widespread among Catholics and even Orthodox, where ironically the Fathers are sometimes piously venerated while not being energetically read.

So two powerful complementary contemporary forces are at work to draw our lay audience once again toward these texts and to free them from previous limited premises: First, this series is a response to the deep hunger for classical Christian exegesis and for the history of exegesis, partly because it has been so long neglected. Second, there is a growing demoralization in relation to actual useful exegetical outcomes of post-Enlightenment historicist and naturalistic-reductionist criticism. Both of these animating energies are found among lay readers of Roman, Eastern and Protestant traditions.

Through the use of the chronological lists and biographical sketches at the back of each volume, readers can locate in time and place the voices displayed in the exegesis of a particular pericope. The chains (catenae) of interpretation of a particular biblical passage thus provide glimpses into the history of the interpretation of a given text. This pattern has venerable antecedents in patristic and medieval exegesis of both Eastern and Western traditions, as well as important expressions in the Reformation tradition.

The Ecumenical Range and Intent

Recognition of need for the Fathers' wisdom ranges over many diverse forms of Christianity. This

has necessitated the cooperation of scholars of widely diverse Christian communities to accomplish the task fairly and in a balanced way. It has been a major ecumenical undertaking.

Under this classic textual umbrella, this series brings together in common spirit Christians who have long distanced themselves from each other through separate and often competing church memories. Under this welcoming umbrella are gathering conservative Protestants with Eastern Orthodox, Baptists with Roman Catholics, Reformed with Arminians and charismatics, Anglicans with Pentecostals, high with low church adherents, and premodern traditionalists with postmodern classicists.

How is it that such varied Christians are able to find inspiration and common faith in these texts? Why are these texts and studies so intrinsically ecumenical, so catholic in their cultural range? Because all of these traditions have an equal right to appeal to the early history of Christian exegesis. All of these traditions can, without a sacrifice of intellect, come together to study texts common to them all. These classic texts have decisively shaped the entire subsequent history of exegesis. Protestants have a right to the Fathers. Athanasius is not owned by Copts, nor is Augustine owned by North Africans. These minds are the common possession of the whole church. The Orthodox do not have exclusive rights over Basil, nor do the Romans over Gregory the Great. Christians everywhere have equal claim to these riches and are discovering them and glimpsing their unity in the body of Christ.

From many varied Christian traditions this project has enlisted as volume editors a team of leading international scholars in ancient Christian writings and the history of exegesis. Among Eastern Orthodox contributors are Professors Andrew Louth of Durham University in England and George Dragas of Holy Cross (Greek Orthodox) School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts. Among Roman Catholic scholars are Benedictine scholar Mark Sheridan of the San Anselmo University of Rome, Jesuit Joseph Lienhard of Fordham University in New York, Cistercian Father Francis Martin of the Catholic University of America, Alberto Ferreiro of Seattle Pacific University, and Sever Voicu of the Eastern European (Romanian) Uniate Catholic tradition, who teaches at the Augustinian Patristic Institute of Rome. The New Testament series is inaugurated with the volume on Matthew offered by the renowned Catholic authority in the history of exegesis, Manlio Simonetti of the University of Rome. Among Anglican communion contributors are Mark Edwards (Oxford), Bishop Kenneth Stevenson (Fareham, Hampshire, in England), J. Robert Wright (New York), Anders Bergquist (St. Albans), Peter Gorday (Atlanta) and Gerald Bray (Cambridge, England, and Birmingham, Alabama). Among Lutheran contributors are Quentin Wesselschmidt (St. Louis), Philip Krey and Eric Heen (Philadelphia), and Arthur Just, William Weinrich and Dean O. Wenthe (all of Ft. Wayne, Indiana). Among distinguished Protestant Reformed, Baptist and other evangelical scholars are John Sailhamer and Steven McKinion (Wake Forest, North Carolina), Craig Blaising and Carmen Hardin (Louisville, Kentucky), Christopher Hall (St. Davids, Pennsylvania),

J. Ligon Duncan III (Jackson, Mississippi), Thomas McCullough (Danville, Kentucky), John R. Franke (Hatfield, Pennsylvania) and Mark Elliott (Hope University Liverpool).

The international team of editors was selected in part to reflect this ecumenical range. They were chosen on the premise not only that they were competent to select fairly those passages that best convey the consensual tradition of early Christian exegesis, but also that they would not omit significant voices within it. They have searched insofar as possible for those comments that self-evidently would be most widely received generally by the whole church of all generations, East and West.

This is not to suggest or imply that all patristic writers agree. One will immediately see upon reading these selections that within the boundaries of orthodoxy, that is, excluding outright denials of ecumenically received teaching, there are many views possible about a given text or idea and that these different views may be strongly affected by wide varieties of social environments and contexts.

The Drew University project has been meticulous about commissioning volume editors. We have sought out world-class scholars, preeminent in international biblical and patristic scholarship, and wise in the history of exegesis. We have not been disappointed. We have enlisted a diverse team of editors, fitting for a global audience that bridges the major communions of Christianity.

The project editors have striven for a high level of consistency and literary quality over the course of this series. As with most projects of this sort, the editorial vision and procedures are progressively being refined and sharpened and fed back into the editorial process.

Honoring Theological Reasoning

Since it stands in the service of the worshiping community, the ACCS unabashedly embraces crucial ecumenical premises as the foundation for its method of editorial selections: revelation in history, trinitarian coherence, divine providence in history, the Christian *kerygma, regula fidei et caritatis* ("the rule of faith and love"), the converting work of the Holy Spirit. These are common assumptions of the living communities of worship that are served by the commentary.

It is common in this transgenerational community of faith to assume that the early consensual ecumenical teachers were led by the Spirit in their interpretive efforts and in their transmitting of Christian truth amid the hazards of history. These texts assume some level of unity and continuity of ecumenical consensus in the mind of the believing church, a consensus more clearly grasped in the patristic period than later. We would be less than true to the sacred text if we allowed modern assumptions to overrun these premises.

An extended project such as this requires a well-defined objective that serves constantly as the organizing principle and determines which approaches take priority in what sort of balance. This objective informs the way in which tensions inherent in its complexity are managed. This objective has already been summarized in the three goals mentioned at the beginning of this introduction. To alter any one of these goals would significantly alter the character of the whole task. We view our

work not only as an academic exercise with legitimate peer review in the academic community, but also as a vocation, a task primarily undertaken *coram Deo* ("before God") and not only *coram hominibus* ("before humanity"). We have been astonished that we have been led far beyond our original intention into a Chinese translation and other translations into major world languages.

This effort is grounded in a deep respect for a distinctively theological reading of Scripture that cannot be reduced to historical, philosophical, scientific or sociological insights or methods. It takes seriously the venerable tradition of ecumenical reflection concerning the premises of revelation, apostolicity, canon and consensuality. A high priority is granted here, contrary to modern assumptions, to theological, christological and triune reasoning as the distinguishing premises of classic Christian thought. This approach does not pit theology against critical theory; instead, it incorporates critical methods and brings them into coordinate accountability within its overarching homiletic-theological-pastoral purposes. Such an endeavor does not cater to any cadre of modern ideological advocacy.

Why Evangelicals Are Increasingly Drawn Toward Patristic Exegesis

Surprising to some, the most extensive new emergent audience for patristic exegesis is found among the expanding worldwide audience of evangelical readers who are now burgeoning from a history of revivalism that has often been thought to be historically unaware. This is a tradition that has often been caricatured as critically backward and hermeneutically challenged. Now Baptist and Pentecostal laity are rediscovering the history of the Holy Spirit. This itself is arguably a work of the Holy Spirit. As those in these traditions continue to mature, they recognize their need for biblical resources that go far beyond those that have been made available to them in both the pietistic and historical-critical traditions.

Both pietism and the Enlightenment were largely agreed in expressing disdain for patristic and classic forms of exegesis. Vital preaching and exegesis must now venture beyond the constrictions of historical-critical work of the century following Schweitzer and beyond the personal existential storytelling of pietism.

During the time I have served as senior editor and executive editor of *Christianity Today,* I have been privileged to surf in these volatile and exciting waves. It has been for me (as a theologian of a liberal mainline communion) like an ongoing seminar in learning to empathize with the tensions, necessities and hungers of the vast heterogeneous evangelical audience.

But why just now is this need for patristic wisdom felt particularly by evangelical leaders and laity? Why are worldwide evangelicals increasingly drawn toward ancient exegesis? What accounts for this rapid and basic reversal of mood among the inheritors of the traditions of Protestant revivalism? It is partly because the evangelical tradition has been long deprived of any vital contact with these patristic sources since the days of Luther, Calvin and Wesley, who knew them well.

This commentary is dedicated to allowing ancient Christian exegetes to speak for themselves. It will not become fixated unilaterally on contemporary criticism. It will provide new textual resources for the lay reader, teacher and pastor that have lain inaccessible during the last two centuries. Without avoiding historical-critical issues that have already received extensive exploration in our time, it will seek to make available to our present-day audience the multicultural, transgenerational, multilingual resources of the ancient ecumenical Christian tradition. It is an awakening, growing, hungry and robust audience.

Such an endeavor is especially poignant and timely now because increasing numbers of evangelical Protestants are newly discovering rich dimensions of dialogue and widening areas of consensus with Orthodox and Catholics on divisive issues long thought irreparable. The study of the Fathers on Scripture promises to further significant interactions between Protestants and Catholics on issues that have plagued them for centuries: justification, authority, Christology, sanctification and eschatology. Why? Because they can find in pre-Reformation texts a common faith to which Christians can appeal. And this is an arena in which Protestants distinctively feel at home: biblical authority and interpretation. A profound yearning broods within the heart of evangelicals for the recovery of the history of exegesis as a basis for the renewal of preaching. This series offers resources for that renewal.

Steps Toward Selections

In moving from raw data to making selections, the volume editors have been encouraged to move judiciously through three steps:

Step 1: *Reviewing extant Greek and Latin commentaries.* The volume editors have been responsible for examining the line-by-line commentaries and homilies on the texts their volume covers. Much of this material remains untranslated into English and some of it into any modern language.

Step 2: *Reviewing digital searches.* The volume editors have been responsible for examining the results of digital searches into the Greek and Latin databases. To get the gist of the context of the passage, ordinarily about ten lines above the raw digital reference and ten lines after the reference have been downloaded for printed output. *Biblia Patristica* has been consulted as needed, especially in cases where the results of the digital searches have been thin. Then the volume editors have determined from these potential digital hits and from published texts those that should be regarded as more serious possibilities for inclusion.

Step 3. *Making selections.* Having assembled verse-by-verse comments from the Greek and Latin digital databases, from extant commentaries, and from already translated English sources, either on disk or in paper printouts, the volume editors have then selected the best comments and reflections of ancient Christian writers on a given biblical text, following agreed upon criteria. The intent is to set apart those few sentences or paragraphs of patristic comment that best reflect the mind of the believing church on that pericope.

The Method of Making Selections

It is useful to provide an explicit account of precisely how we made these selections. We invite others to attempt similar procedures and compare outcomes on particular passages.[5] We welcome the counsel of others who might review our choices and suggest how they might have been better made. We have sought to avoid unconsciously biasing our selections, and we have solicited counsel to help us achieve this end.

In order that the whole project might remain cohesive, the protocols for making commentary selections have been jointly agreed upon and stated clearly in advance by the editors, publishers, translators and research teams of the ACCS. What follows is our checklist in assembling these extracts.

The following principles of selection have been mutually agreed upon to guide the editors in making spare, wise, meaningful catena selections from the vast patristic corpus:

1. From our huge database with its profuse array of possible comments, we have preferred those passages that have enduring relevance, penetrating significance, crosscultural applicability and practical applicability.

2. The volume editors have sought to identify patristic selections that display trenchant rhetorical strength and self-evident persuasive power, so as not to require extensive secondary explanation. The editorial challenge has been to identify the most vivid comments and bring them to accurate translation.

We hope that in most cases selections will be pungent, memorable, quotable, aphoristic and short (often a few sentences or a single paragraph) rather than extensive technical homilies or detailed expositions, and that many will have some narrative interest and illuminative power. This criterion follows in the train of much Talmudic, Midrashic and rabbinic exegesis. In some cases, however, detailed comments and longer sections of homilies have been considered worthy of inclusion.

3. We seek the most representative comments that best reflect the mind of the believing church (of all times and cultures). Selections focus more on the attempt to identify consensual strains of exegesis than sheer speculative brilliance or erratic innovation. The thought or interpretation can emerge out of individual creativity, but it must not be inconsistent with what the apostolic tradition teaches and what the church believes. What the consensual tradition trusts least is individualistic innovation that has not yet subtly learned what the worshiping community already knows.

Hence we are less interested in idiosyncratic interpretations of a given text than we are in those

[5]A number of Ph.D. dissertations are currently being written on the history of exegesis of a particular passage of Scripture. This may develop into an emerging academic methodology that promises to change both biblical and patristic studies in favor of careful textual and intertextual analysis, consensuality assessment and history of interpretation, rather than historicist and naturalistic reductionism.

texts that fairly represent the central flow of ecumenical consensual exegesis. Just what is central is left for the fair professional judgment of our ecumenically distinguished Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic volume editors to discern. We have included, for example, many selections from among the best comments of Origen and Tertullian, but not those authors' peculiar eccentricities that have been widely distrusted by the ancient ecumenical tradition.

4. We have especially sought out for inclusion those consensus-bearing authors who have been relatively disregarded, often due to their social location or language or nationality, insofar as their work is resonant with the mainstream of ancient consensual exegesis. This is why we have sought out special consultants in Syriac, Coptic and Armenian.

5. We have sought to cull out annoying, coarse, graceless, absurdly allegorical[6] or racially offensive interpretations. But where our selections may have some of those edges, we have supplied footnotes to assist readers better to understand the context and intent of the text.

6. We have constantly sought an appropriate balance of Eastern, Western and African traditions. We have intentionally attempted to include Alexandrian, Antiochene, Roman, Syriac, Coptic and Armenian traditions of interpretation. Above all, we want to provide sound, stimulating, reliable exegesis and illuminating exposition of the text by the whole spectrum of classic Christian writers.

7. We have made a special effort where possible to include the voices of women[7] such as Macrina,[8] Eudoxia, Egeria, Faltonia Betitia Proba, the Sayings of the Desert Mothers and others who report the biblical interpretations of women of the ancient Christian tradition.

8. In order to anchor the commentary solidly in primary sources so as to allow the ancient Christian writers to address us on their own terms, the focus is on the texts of the ancient Christian writers themselves, not on modern commentators' views or opinions of the ancient writers. We have looked for those comments on Scripture that will assist the contemporary reader to encounter the deepest level of penetration of the text that has been reached by is best interpreters living amid highly divergent early Christian social settings.

Our purpose is not to engage in critical speculations on textual variants or stemma of the text, or

[6]Allegorical treatments of texts are not to be ruled out, but fairly and judiciously assessed as to their explanatory value and typicality. There is a prevailing stereotype that ancient Christian exegesis is so saturated with allegory as to make it almost useless. After making our selections on a merit basis according to our criteria, we were surprised at the limited extent of protracted allegorical passages selected. After making a count of allegorical passages, we discovered that less than one twentieth of these selections have a decisive allegorical concentration. So while allegory is admittedly an acceptable model of exegesis for the ancient Christian writers, especially those of the Alexandrian school and especially with regard to Old Testament texts, it has not turned out to be as dominant a model as we had thought it might be.

[7]Through the letters, histories, theological and biographical writings of Tertullian, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Palladius, Augustine, Ephrem, Gerontius, Paulinus of Nola and many anonymous writers (of the Lives of Mary of Egypt, Thais, Pelagia).

[8]Whose voice is heard through her younger brother, Gregory of Nyssa.

extensive deliberations on its cultural context or social location, however useful those exercises may be, but to present the most discerning comments of the ancient Christian writers with a minimum of distraction. This project would be entirely misconceived if thought of as a modern commentary on patristic commentaries.

9. We have intentionally sought out and gathered comments that will aid effective preaching, comments that give us a firmer grasp of the plain sense of the text, its authorial intent, and its spiritual meaning for the worshiping community. We want to help Bible readers and teachers gain ready access to the deepest reflection of the ancient Christian community of faith on any particular text of Scripture.

It would have inordinately increased the word count and cost if our intention had been to amass exhaustively all that had ever been said about a Scripture text by every ancient Christian writer. Rather we have deliberately selected out of this immense data stream the strongest patristic interpretive reflections on the text and sought to deliver them in accurate English translation.

To refine and develop these guidelines, we have sought to select as volume editors either patristics scholars who understand the nature of preaching and the history of exegesis, or biblical scholars who are at ease working with classical Greek and Latin sources. We have preferred editors who are sympathetic to the needs of lay persons and pastors alike, who are generally familiar with the patristic corpus in its full range, and who intuitively understand the dilemma of preaching today. The international and ecclesiastically diverse character of this team of editors corresponds with the global range of our task and audience, which bridge all major communions of Christianity.

Is the ACCS a Commentary?

We have chosen to call our work a commentary, and with good reason. A commentary, in its plain sense definition, is "a series of illustrative or explanatory notes on any important work, as on the Scriptures."[9] *Commentary* is an Anglicized form of the Latin *commentarius* (an "annotation" or "memoranda" on a subject or text or series of events). In its theological meaning it is a work that explains, analyzes or expounds a portion of Scripture. In antiquity it was a book of notes explaining some earlier work such as Julius Hyginus's commentaries on Virgil in the first century. Jerome mentions many commentators on secular texts before his time.

The commentary is typically preceded by a proem in which the questions are asked: who wrote it? why? when? to whom? etc. Comments may deal with grammatical or lexical problems in the text. An attempt is made to provide the gist of the author's thought or motivation, and perhaps to deal with sociocultural influences at work in the text or philological nuances. A commentary usually

[9] *Funk & Wagnalls New "Standard" Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1947).

takes a section of a classical text and seeks to make its meaning clear to readers today, or proximately clearer, in line with the intent of the author.

The Western literary genre of commentary is definitively shaped by the history of early Christian commentaries on Scripture, from Origen and Hilary through John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria to Thomas Aquinas and Nicolas of Lyra. It leaves too much unsaid simply to assume that the Christian biblical commentary took a previously extant literary genre and reshaped it for Christian texts. Rather it is more accurate to say that the Western literary genre of the commentary (and especially the biblical commentary) has patristic commentaries as its decisive pattern and prototype, and those commentaries have strongly influenced the whole Western conception of the genre of commentary. Only in the last two centuries, since the development of modern historicist methods of criticism, have some scholars sought to delimit the definition of a commentary more strictly so as to include only historicist interests—philological and grammatical insights, inquiries into author, date and setting, or into sociopolitical or economic circumstances, or literary analyses of genre, structure and function of the text, or questions of textual criticism and reliability. The ACCS editors do not feel apologetic about calling this work a commentary in its classic sense.

Many astute readers of modern commentaries are acutely aware of one of their most persistent habits of mind: control of the text by the interpreter, whereby the ancient text comes under the power (values, assumptions, predispositions, ideological biases) of the modern interpreter. This habit is based upon a larger pattern of modern chauvinism that views later critical sources as more worthy than earlier. This prejudice tends to view the biblical text primarily or sometimes exclusively through historical-critical lenses accommodative to modernity.

Although we respect these views and our volume editors are thoroughly familiar with contemporary biblical criticism, the ACCS editors freely take the assumption that the Christian canon is to be respected as the church's sacred text. The text's assumptions about itself cannot be made less important than modern assumptions about it. The reading and preaching of Scripture are vital to the church's life. The central hope of the ACCS endeavor is that it might contribute in some small way to the revitalization of that life through a renewed discovery of the earliest readings of the church's Scriptures.

A Gentle Caveat for Those Who Expect Ancient Writers to Conform to Modern Assumptions

If one begins by assuming as normative for a commentary the typical modern expression of what a commentary is and the preemptive truthfulness of modern critical methods, the classic Christian exegetes are by definition always going to appear as dated, quaint, premodern, hence inadequate, and in some instances comic or even mean-spirited, prejudiced, unjust and oppressive. So in the interest of hermeneutic fairness, it is recommended that the modern reader not impose on ancient

Christian exegetes lately achieved modern assumptions about the valid reading of Scripture. The ancient Christian writers constantly challenge what were later to become these unspoken, hidden and often indeed camouflaged modern assumptions.

This series does not seek to resolve the debate between the merits of ancient and modern exegesis in each text examined. Rather it seeks merely to present the excerpted comments of the ancient interpreters with as few distractions as possible. We will leave it to others to discuss the merits of ancient versus modern methods of exegesis. But even this cannot be done adequately without extensively examining the texts of ancient exegesis. And until now biblical scholars have not had easy access to many of these texts. This is what this series is for.

The purpose of exegesis in the patristic period was humbly to seek the revealed truth the Scriptures convey. Often it was not even offered to those who were as yet unready to put it into practice. In these respects much modern exegesis is entirely different: It does not assume the truth of Scripture as revelation, nor does it submit personally to the categorical moral requirement of the revealed text: that it be taken seriously as divine address. Yet we are here dealing with patristic writers who assumed that readers would not even approach an elementary discernment of the meaning of the text if they were not ready to live in terms of its revelation, i.e., to practice it in order to hear it, as was recommended so often in the classic tradition.

The patristic models of exegesis often do not conform to modern commentary assumptions that tend to resist or rule out chains of scriptural reference. These are often demeaned as deplorable proof-texting. But among the ancient Christian writers such chains of biblical reference were very important in thinking about the text in relation to the whole testimony of sacred Scripture by the analogy of faith, comparing text with text, on the premise that *scripturam ex scriptura explicandam esse* ("Scripture is best explained from Scripture").

We beg readers not to force the assumptions of twentieth-century fundamentalism on the ancient Christian writers, who themselves knew nothing of what we now call fundamentalism. It is uncritical to conclude that they were simple fundamentalists in the modern sense. Patristic exegesis was not fundamentalist, because the Fathers were not reacting against modern naturalistic reductionism. They were constantly protesting a merely literal or plain-sense view of the text, always looking for its spiritual and moral and typological nuances. Modern fundamentalism oppositely is a defensive response branching out and away from modern historicism, which looks far more like modern historicism than ancient typological reasoning. Ironically, this makes both liberal and fundamentalist exegesis much more like each other than either are like the ancient Christian exegesis, because they both tend to appeal to rationalistic and historicist assumptions raised to the forefront by the Enlightenment.

Since the principle prevails in ancient Christian exegesis that each text is illumined by other texts and by the whole of the history of revelation, we find in patristic comments on a given text

many other subtexts interwoven in order to illumine that text. When ancient exegesis weaves many Scriptures together, it does not limit its focus to a single text as much modern exegesis prefers, but constantly relates it to other texts by analogy, intensively using typological reasoning as did the rabbinic tradition.

The attempt to read the New Testament while ruling out all theological and moral, to say nothing of ecclesiastical, sacramental and dogmatic assumptions that have prevailed generally in the community of faith that wrote it, seems to many who participate in that community today a very thin enterprise indeed. When we try to make sense of the New Testament while ruling out the plausibility of the incarnation and resurrection, the effort appears arrogant and distorted. One who tendentiously reads one page of patristic exegesis, gasps and tosses it away because it does not conform adequately to the canons of modern exegesis and historicist commentary is surely no model of critical effort.

On Misogyny and Anti-Semitism

The questions of anti-Semitism and misogyny require circumspect comment. The patristic writers are perceived by some to be incurably anti-Semitic or misogynous or both. I would like to briefly attempt a cautious apologia for the ancient Christian writers, leaving details to others more deliberate efforts. I know how hazardous this is, especially when done briefly. But it has become such a stumbling block to some of our readers that it prevents them even from listening to the ancient ecumenical teachers. The issue deserves some reframing and careful argumentation.

Although these are challengeable assumptions and highly controverted, it is my view that modern racial anti-Semitism was not in the minds of the ancient Christian writers. Their arguments were not framed in regard to the hatred of a race, but rather the place of the elect people of God, the Jews, in the history of the divine-human covenant that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Patristic arguments may have had the unintended effect of being unfair to women according to modern standards, but their intention was to understand the role of women according to apostolic teaching.

This does not solve all of the tangled moral questions regarding the roles of Christians in the histories of anti-Semitism and misogyny, which require continuing fair-minded study and clarification. Whether John Chrysostom or Justin Martyr were anti-Semitic depends on whether the term *anti-Semitic* has a racial or religious-typological definition. In my view, the patristic texts that appear to modern readers to be anti-Semitic in most cases have a typological reference and are based on a specific approach to the interpretation of Scripture—the analogy of faith—which assesses each particular text in relation to the whole trend of the history of revelation and which views the difference between Jew and Gentile under christological assumptions and not merely as a matter of genetics or race.

Even in their harshest strictures against Judaizing threats to the gospel, they did not consider

Jews as racially or genetically inferior people, as modern anti-Semites are prone to do. Even in their comments on Paul's strictures against women teaching, they showed little or no animus against the female gender as such, but rather exalted women as "the glory of man."

Compare the writings of Rosemary Radford Ruether and David C. Ford[10] on these perplexing issues. Ruether steadily applies modern criteria of justice to judge the inadequacies of the ancient Christian writers. Ford seeks to understand the ancient Christian writers empathically from within their own historical assumptions, limitations, scriptural interpretations and deeper intentions. While both treatments are illuminating, Ford's treatment comes closer to a fair-minded assessment of patristic intent.

A Note on Pelagius

The selection criteria do not rule out passages from Pelagius's commentaries at those points at which they provide good exegesis. This requires special explanation, if we are to hold fast to our criterion of consensuality.

The literary corpus of Pelagius remains highly controverted. Though Pelagius was by general consent the arch-heretic of the early fifth century, Pelagius's edited commentaries, as we now have them highly worked over by later orthodox writers, were widely read and preserved for future generations under other names. So Pelagius presents us with a textual dilemma.

Until 1934 all we had was a corrupted text of his Pauline commentary and fragments quoted by Augustine. Since then his works have been much studied and debated, and we now know that the Pelagian corpus has been so warped by a history of later redactors that we might be tempted not to quote it at all. But it does remain a significant source of fifth-century comment on Paul. So we cannot simply ignore it. My suggestion is that the reader is well advised not to equate the fifth-century Pelagius too easily with later standard stereotypes of the arch-heresy of Pelagianism.[11]

It has to be remembered that the text of Pelagius on Paul as we now have it was preserved in the corpus of Jerome and probably reworked in the sixth century by either Primasius or Cassiodorus or both. These commentaries were repeatedly recycled and redacted, so what we have today may be regarded as consonant with much standard later patristic thought and exegesis, excluding, of course, that which is ecumenically censured as "Pelagianism."

Pelagius's original text was in specific ways presumably explicitly heretical, but what we have now is largely unexceptional, even if it is still possible to detect points of disagreement with Augustine.

---

[10]Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gregory of Nazianzus: Rhetor and Philosopher* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974); David C. Ford, "Men and Women in the Early Church: The Full Views of St. John Chrysostom" (So. Canaan, Penn.: St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 1995). Cf. related works by John Meyendorff, Stephen B. Clark and Paul K. Jewett.

[11]Cf. Adalbert Hamman, Supplementum to PL 1:1959, cols. 1101-1570.

We may have been ill-advised to quote this material as "Pelagius" and perhaps might have quoted it as "Pseudo-Pelagius" or "Anonymous," but here we follow contemporary reference practice.

What to Expect from the Introductions, Overviews and the Design of the Commentary

In writing the introduction for a particular volume, the volume editor typically discusses the opinion of the Fathers regarding authorship of the text, the importance of the biblical book for patristic interpreters, the availability or paucity of patristic comment, any salient points of debate between the Fathers, and any particular challenges involved in editing that particular volume. The introduction affords the opportunity to frame the entire commentary in a manner that will help the general reader understand the nature and significance of patristic comment on the biblical texts under consideration, and to help readers find their bearings and use the commentary in an informed way.

The purpose of the *overview* is to give readers a brief glimpse into the cumulative argument of the pericope, identifying its major patristic contributors. This is a task of summarizing. We here seek to render a service to readers by stating the gist of patristic argument on a series of verses. Ideally the overview should track a reasonably cohesive thread of argument among patristic comments on the pericope, even though they are derived from diverse sources and times. The design of the overview may vary somewhat from volume to volume of this series, depending on the requirements of the specific book of Scripture.

The purpose of the selection *heading* is to introduce readers quickly into the subject matter of that selection. In this way readers can quickly grasp what is coming by glancing over the headings and overview. Usually it is evident upon examination that some phrase in the selection naturally defines the subject of the heading. Several verses may be linked together for comment.

Since biographical information on each ancient Christian writer is in abundant supply in various general reference works, dictionaries and encyclopedias, the ACCS has no reason to duplicate these efforts. But we have provided in each volume a simple chronological list of those quoted in that volume, and an alphabetical set of biographical sketches with minimal ecclesiastical, jurisdictional and place identifications.

Each passage of Scripture presents its own distinct set of problems concerning both selection and translation. The sheer quantity of textual materials that has been searched out, assessed and reviewed varies widely from book to book. There are also wide variations in the depth of patristic insight into texts, the complexity of culturally shaped allusions and the modern relevance of the materials examined. It has been a challenge to each volume editor to draw together and develop a reasonably cohesive sequence of textual interpretations from all of this diversity.

The footnotes intend to assist readers with obscurities and potential confusions. In the annotations we have identified many of the Scripture allusions and historical references embedded within the texts.

The aim of our editing is to help readers move easily from text to text through a deliberate editorial linking process that is seen in the overviews, headings and annotations. We have limited the footnotes to roughly less than a one in ten ratio to the patristic texts themselves. Abbreviations are used in the footnotes, and a list of abbreviations is included in each volume. We found that the task of editorial linkage need not be forced into a single pattern for all biblical books but must be molded by that particular book.

The Complementarity of Interdisciplinary Research Methods in This Investigation

The ACCS is intrinsically an interdisciplinary research endeavor. It conjointly employs several diverse but interrelated methods of research, each of which is a distinct field of inquiry in its own right. Principal among these methods are the following:

Textual criticism. No literature is ever transmitted by handwritten manuscripts without the risk of some variations in the text creeping in. Because we are working with ancient texts, frequently recopied, we are obliged to employ all methods of inquiry appropriate to the study of ancient texts. To that end, we have depended heavily on the most reliable text-critical scholarship employed in both biblical and patristic studies. The work of textual critics in these fields has been invaluable in providing us with the most authoritative and reliable versions of ancient texts currently available. We have gratefully employed the extensive critical analyses used in creating the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae and Cetedoc databases.

In respect to the biblical texts, our database researchers and volume editors have often been faced with the challenge of considering which variants within the biblical text itself are assumed in a particular selection. It is not always self-evident which translation or stemma of the biblical text is being employed by the ancient commentator. We have supplied explanatory footnotes in some cases where these various textual challenges may raise potential concerns for readers.

Social-historical contextualization. Our volume editors have sought to understand the historical, social, economic and political contexts of the selections taken from these ancient texts. This understanding is often vital to the process of discerning what a given comment means or intends and which comments are most appropriate to the biblical passage at hand. However, our mission is not primarily to discuss these contexts extensively or to display them in the references. We are not primarily interested in the social location of the text or the philological history of particular words or in the societal consequences of the text, however interesting or evocative these may be. Some of these questions, however, can be treated briefly in the footnotes wherever the volume editors deem necessary.

Though some modest contextualization of patristic texts is at times useful and required, our purpose is not to provide a detailed social-historical placement of each patristic text. That would require volumes ten times this size. We know there are certain texts that need only slight contextualization, others that require a great deal more. Meanwhile, other texts stand on their own easily

and brilliantly, in some cases aphoristically, without the need of extensive contextualization. These are the texts we have most sought to identify and include. We are least interested in those texts that obviously require a lot of convoluted explanation for a modern audience. We are particularly inclined to rule out those blatantly offensive texts (apparently anti-Semitic, morally repugnant, glaringly chauvinistic) and those that are intrinsically ambiguous or those that would simply be self-evidently alienating to the modern audience.

Exegesis. If the practice of social-historical contextualization is secondary to the purpose of the ACCS, the emphasis on thoughtful patristic exegesis of the biblical text is primary. The intention of our volume editors is to search for selections that define, discuss and explain the meanings that patristic commentators have discovered in the biblical text. Our purpose is not to provide an inoffensive or extensively demythologized, aseptic modern interpretation of the ancient commentators on each Scripture text but to allow their comments to speak for themselves from within their own worldview.

In this series the term *exegesis* is used more often in its classic than in its modern sense. In its classic sense, exegesis includes efforts to explain, interpret and comment on a text, its meaning, its sources, its connections with other texts. It implies a close reading of the text, using whatever linguistic, historical, literary or theological resources are available to explain the text. It is contrasted with *eisegesis,* which implies that the interpreter has imposed his or her own personal opinions or assumptions on the text.

The patristic writers actively practiced *intra*textual exegesis, which seeks to define and identify the exact wording of the text, its grammatical structure and the interconnectedness of its parts. They also practiced *extra*textual exegesis, seeking to discern the geographical, historical or cultural context in which the text was written. Most important, they were also very well-practiced in *inter*textual exegesis, seeking to discern the meaning of a text by comparing it with other texts.

Hermeneutics. We are especially attentive to the ways in which the ancient Christian writers described their own interpreting processes. This hermeneutic self-analysis is especially rich in the reflections of Origen, Tertullian, Jerome, Augustine and Vincent of Lérins.[12] Although most of our volume editors are thoroughly familiar with contemporary critical discussions of hermeneutical and literary methods, it is not the purpose of ACCS to engage these issues directly. Instead, we are concerned to display and reveal the various hermeneutic assumptions that inform the patristic reading of Scripture, chiefly by letting the writers speak in their own terms.

Homiletics. One of the practical goals of the ACCS is the renewal of contemporary preaching in the light of the wisdom of ancient Christian preaching. With this goal in mind, many of the most trenchant and illuminating comments included are selected not from formal commentaries but

[12]Our concern for this aspect of the project has resulted in the production of a companion volume to the ACCS written by the ACCS Associate Editor, Prof. Christopher Hall of Eastern College, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

from the homilies of the ancient Christian writers. It comes as no surprise that the most renowned among these early preachers were also those most actively engaged in the task of preaching. The prototypical Fathers who are most astute at describing their own homiletic assumptions and methods are Gregory the Great, Leo the Great, Augustine, Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Peter Chrysologus and Caesarius of Arles.

Pastoral care. Another intensely practical goal of the ACCS is to renew our readers' awareness of the ancient tradition of pastoral care and ministry to persons. Among the leading Fathers who excel in pastoral wisdom and in application of the Bible to the work of ministry are Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Augustine, and Gregory the Great. Our editors have presented this monumental pastoral wisdom in a guileless way that is not inundated by the premises of contemporary psychotherapy, sociology and naturalistic reductionism.

Translation theory. Each volume is composed of direct quotations in dynamic equivalent English translation of ancient Christian writers, translated from the original language in its best received text. The adequacy of a given attempt at translation is always challengeable. The task of translation is intrinsically debatable. We have sought dynamic equivalency[13] without lapsing into paraphrase, and a literary translation without lapsing into wooden literalism. We have tried consistently to make accessible to contemporary readers the vital nuances and energies of the languages of antiquity. Whenever possible we have opted for metaphors and terms that are normally used by communicators today.

What Have We Achieved?

We have designed the first full-scale early Christian commentary on Scripture in the last five hundred years. Any future attempts at a Christian Talmud or patristic commentary on Scripture will either follow much of our design or stand in some significant response to it.

We have successfully brought together a distinguished international network of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox scholars, editors and translators of the highest quality and reputation to accomplish this design.

[13]The theory of dynamic equivalency has been most thoroughly worked out by Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), and Eugene A. Nida and Jan de Waard, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville, Tenn.: Nelson, 1986). Its purpose is "to state clearly and accurately the meaning of the original texts in words and forms that are widely accepted by people who use English as a means of communication." It attempts to set forth the writer's "content and message in a standard, everyday, natural form of English." Its aim is "to give today's readers maximum understanding of the content of the original texts." "Every effort has been made to use language that is natural, clear, simple, and unambiguous. Consequently there has been no attempt to reproduce in English the parts of speech, sentence structure, word order and grammatical devices of the original languages. Faithfulness in translation also includes a faithful representation of the cultural and historical features of the original, without any attempt to modernize the text." [Preface, *Good News Bible: The Bible in Today's English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1976)]. This does not imply a preference for paraphrase, but a middle ground between literary and literal theories of translation. Not all of our volume editors have viewed the translation task precisely in the same way, but the hope of the series has been generally guided by the theory of dynamic equivalency.

This brilliant network of scholars, editors, publishers, technicians and translators, which constitutes an amazing *novum* and a distinct new ecumenical reality in itself, has jointly brought into formulation the basic pattern and direction of the project, gradually amending and correcting it as needed. We have provided an interdisciplinary experimental research model for the integration of digital search techniques with the study of the history of exegesis.

At this time of writing, we are approximately halfway through the actual production of the series and about halfway through the time frame of the project, having developed the design to a point where it is not likely to change significantly. We have made time-dated contracts with all volume editors for the remainder of the volumes. We are thus well on our way toward bringing the English ACCS to completion. We have extended and enhanced our international network to a point where we are now poised to proceed into modern non-English language versions of ACCS. We already have inaugurated editions in Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian and Italian, and are preparing for editions in Arabic and German, with several more languages under consideration.

We have received the full cooperation and support of Drew University as academic sponsor of the project—a distinguished university that has a remarkable record of supporting major international publication projects that have remained in print for long periods of time, in many cases over one-hundred years. The most widely used Bible concordance and biblical word-reference system in the world today was composed by Drew professor James Strong. It was the very room once occupied by Professor Strong, where the concordance research was done in the 1880s, that for many years was my office at Drew and coincidentally the place where this series was conceived. Today *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* rests on the shelves of most pastoral libraries in the English-speaking world over a hundred years after its first publication. Similarly the *New York Times's* Arno Press has kept in print the major multivolume Drew University work of John M'Clintock and James Strong, *Theological and Exegetical Encyclopedia*. The major edition of Christian classics in Chinese was done at Drew University fifty years ago and is still in print. Drew University has supplied much of the leadership, space, library, work-study assistance and services that have enabled these durable international scholarly projects to be undertaken.

Our selfless benefactors have preferred to remain anonymous. They have been well-informed, active partners in its conceptualization and development, and unflagging advocates and counselors in the support of this lengthy and costly effort. The series has been blessed by steady and generous support, and accompanied by innumerable gifts of providence.

Thomas C. Oden
Henry Anson Buttz Professor of Theology, Drew University
General Editor, ACCS

A Guide to Using This Commentary

Several features have been incorporated into the design of this commentary. The following comments are intended to assist readers in making full use of this volume.

Pericopes of Scripture

The scriptural text has been divided into pericopes, or passages, usually several verses in length. Each of these pericopes is given a heading, which appears at the beginning of the pericope. For example, the first pericope in the commentary on John is "1:1 The Word in the Beginning John 1:1."

Overviews

Following each pericope of text is an overview of the patristic comments on that pericope. The format of this overview varies within the volumes of this series, depending on the requirements of the specific book of Scripture. The function of the overview is to provide a brief summary of all the comments to follow. It tracks a reasonably cohesive thread of argument among patristic comments, even though they are derived from diverse sources and generations. Thus the summaries do not proceed chronologically or by verse sequence. Rather they seek to rehearse the overall course of the patristic comment on that pericope.

We do not assume that the commentators themselves anticipated or expressed a formally received cohesive argument but rather that the various arguments tend to flow in a plausible, recognizable pattern. Modern readers can thus glimpse aspects of continuity in the flow of diverse exegetical traditions representing various generations and geographical locations.

Topical Headings

An abundance of varied patristic comment is available for each pericope of these letters. For this reason we have broken the pericopes into two levels. First is the verse with its topical heading. The patristic comments are then focused on aspects of each verse, with topical headings summarizing the essence of the patristic comment by evoking a key phrase, metaphor or idea. This feature provides a bridge by which modern readers can enter into the heart of the patristic comment.

Identifying the Patristic Texts

Following the topical heading of each section of comment, the name of the patristic commentator is given. An English translation of the patristic comment is then provided. This is immediately followed by the title of the patristic work and the textual reference—either by book, section and subsection or by book-and-verse references.

The Footnotes

Readers who wish to pursue a deeper investigation of the patristic works cited in this commentary will find the footnotes especially valuable. A footnote number directs the reader to the notes at the bottom of the right-hand column, where in addition to other notations (clarifications or biblical cross references) one will find information on English translations (where available) and standard original-language editions of the work cited. An abbreviated citation (normally citing the book, volume and page number) of the work is provided. A key to the abbreviations is provided on page xv. Where there is any serious ambiguity or textual problem in the selection, we have tried to reflect the best available textual tradition.

Where original language texts have remained untranslated into English, we provide new translations. Wherever current English translations are already well rendered, they are utilized, but where necessary they are stylistically updated. A single asterisk (*) indicates that a previous English translation has been updated to modern English or amended for easier reading. The double asterisk (**) indicates either that a new translation has been provided or that some extant translation has been significantly amended. We have standardized spellings and made grammatical variables uniform so that our English references will not reflect the odd spelling variables of the older English translations. For ease of reading we have in some cases edited out superfluous conjunctions.

For the convenience of computer database users the digital database references are provided to either the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (Greek texts) or to the Cetedoc (Latin texts) in the appendix found on pages 367-73.

Abbreviations

ACA	St. Thomas Aquinas. *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels Collected out of the Works of the Fathers*. 6 vols. New Edition. Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1874.
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1946-.
AEG	H. D. Smith, ed. *Ante-Nicene Exegesis of the Gospels*. 6 vols. London: SPCK,
1925-1929.	
AF	J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, trans. *The Apostolic Fathers*. Edited by M. W. Holmes. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1989.
ANF	A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds. Ante-Nicene Fathers. 10 vols. Buffalo, N.Y.: Christian Literature, 1885-1896. Reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1951-1956; Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
CB709	Saint Ephrem the Syrian, *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, texte syriaque (Manuscrit Chester Beatty 709). Folios additionels.* Chester Beatty Monographs, No. 8b. Edited and translated by Dom Louis Leloir, OSB. Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1963.
CB709 add	Saint Ephrem the Syrian, *Commentaire de l'Évangile concordant, texte syriaque (Manuscrit Chester Beatty 709). Folios additionels.* Chester Beatty Monographs, No. 8b. Edited and translated by Dom Louis Leloir, OSB. Leuven: Peeters, 1990
CCL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1953-.
CS	Cistercian Studies. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1973-.
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Louvain, Belgium, 1903-.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vienna, 1866-.
DA	*Didascalia Apostolorum*. The Syriac version translated and accompanied by the Verona Latin fragments. With an Introduction and Notes by R. Hugh Connoly. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929.
DECT	*Documents in Early Christian Thought*. Edited by Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
ECLP	Carolinne White. *Early Christian Latin Poets*. The Early Church Fathers. London: Routledge, 2000.
ECS	Pauline Allen, et al., eds. Early Christian Studies. Strathfield, Australia: St. Paul's Publications, 2001-.
ECTD	C. McCarthy, trans. and ed. *Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron: An English Translation of Chester Beatty Syriac MS 709. Journal of Semitic Studies* Supplement 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the University of Manchester, 1993.
EEC	A. Di Berardino, ed. *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*. Translated by A. Walford. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
ESH	Ephrem the Syrian. *Hymns*. Translated and introduced by Kathleen E. McVey. Preface by John Meyendorff. Classics in Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1989.

FC Fathers of the Church: A New Translation. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947-.

FGTG Jean Daniélou and Herbert Musurillo, trans. and eds. *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961; repr. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979.

GCS Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1897-.

GTDO Paul Koetschau, ed. *Des Gregorios Thaumaturgos Dankrede an Origenes*. Freiburg and Leipzig: Mohr, 1894.

HBM Matthew Britt, ed. *The Hymns of the Breviary and Missal*, ed., rev.ed. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1924.

HM Michael J. Walsh, ed. Heythrop Monographs. London: Heythrop College, 1976-.

JECS *Journal of Early Christian Studies*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993-.

JFA E. Barnecut, ed. *Journey with the Fathers: Commentaries on the Sunday Gospels, Year A*. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1992.

JFB E. Barnecut, ed. *Journey with the Fathers: Commentaries on the Sunday Gospels, Year B*. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1993.

JFC E. Barnecut, ed. Journey with the Fathers: Commentaries on the Sunday *Gospels, Year C*. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1994.

JKGK *Johannes-kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*. Edited by Joseph Reuss. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966.

KRBM Marjorie Carpenter, trans. and ed. *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist*. 2 vols. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1970-1973.

LF A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church Anterior to the Division of the East and West. Translated by members of the English Church. 44 vols. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1800-1881.

MCSW *Maximus the Confessor: Selected Writings*. Translated by George C. Berthold with Jaroslav Pelikan and Irénée-Henri Dalmais. The Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

MFC Message of the Fathers of the Church. Edited by Thomas Halton. Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1983-.

MOP Melito of Sardis. *On Pascha: With the Fragments of Melito and Other Material Related to the Quartodecimans*. Translated by Alistair Stewart-Sykes. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001.

MTIN *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*. Translated from Bedjan's Syriac text with an introduction and registers by A. J. Wensinck Series: [Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen. Afd. Letterkunde. Nieuwe reeks. Dl. 23. no. 1.] Publisher: Amsterdam, (1923). (Reprint: Wiesbaden: M. Sandig oH. G., 1969).

NPB Nova Patrum Bibliothecae, Rome: 1853.

NHMS J. M. Robinson and H. J. Klimkeit, eds. Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993-.

NPNF P. Schaff et al., eds. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. 2 series (14 vols. each). Buffalo, N.Y.: Christian Literature, 1887-1894; Reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1952-1956; Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

OECS Henry Chadwick and Andrew Louth, eds. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991-.

OHS Basil of Caesarea. *On the Holy Spirit*. Translated by D. Anderson, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Press, 1980.

PDCW *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*. Translated by Colm Luibheid. The Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1987.

PG	J.-P. Migne, ed. Patrologia cursus completus. Series Graeca. 166 vols. Paris: Migne, 1857-1886.
PL	J.-P. Migne, ed. Patrologia cursus completus. Series Latina. 221 vols. Paris: Migne, 1844-1864.
POG	Eusebius. *The Proof of the Gospel*. 2 vols. Translated by W. J. Ferrar. London: SPCK, 1920; Reprinted, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1981.
PTA	Dieter Hagedorn, Rudolf Kassel, Ludwig Koenen and Reinhold Merkelbach, eds. Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen. Bonn: Habelt, 1968-.
SC	H. de Lubac, J. Daniélou et al., eds. Sources Chrétiennes. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1941-.
SSGF	M. F. Toal, trans. and ed. *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers: A Manual of Preaching, Spiritual Reading and Meditation*. 4 vols. Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1958; Reprint, Swedesboro, N.J.: Preservation Press, 1996.
TAM	Ernest Evans, ed. and trans. *Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem*. 2 vols. Oxford Early Christian Tests. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.
TLG	L. Berkowitz and K. Squiter, eds. *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae: Canon of Greek Authors and Works*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.
TP	*The Philokalia*. The complete text compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth. Translated and edited by G.E.H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware. 4 vols. London: Farber and Farber, 1979-1995.
TS	Texts and Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891.
TTAP	Ernest Evans, ed. *Tertullian's Treatise Against Praxeas*. London: SPCK, 1948.
TTR	Ernest Evans, ed. and trans. with an Introduction and Commentary. *Tertullian's Treatise on the Resurrection*. London: SPCK, 1960.
WSA	J. E. Rotelle, ed. *Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the Twenty-First Century*. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1995.

Introduction to John

Among the four living creatures of the Apocalypse, the Gospel according to John has most often been identified with the eagle.[1] Augustine likens John to "an eagle hovering among Christ's sayings of the more sublime order and in no way descending to earth but on rare occasions."[2] The eagle symbolizes a Gospel so sublime that, as John Chrysostom says, "if people actually had the capacity to receive and retain these words, they could no longer exist as mere mortals or remain on the earth."[3] The very nature of this Gospel in particular brings out the best in the ancient Christian tradition of interpretation. A purely historical-grammatical, let alone historical-critical, approach to the text would lend a helpful but impoverished interpretation at best—one out of sync with this most "spiritual Gospel," as Clement of Alexandria termed it. Early Christian interpreters have what Maurice Wiles calls "a certain intuitive sympathy of understanding,"[4] providing a much fuller insight into the meaning of the Gospel. Chief among these interpreters are the ancient Christian writers contained in this volume of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. This introduction will serve to orient the reader into the milieu of the early church's commentary on John.

There was a keen interest among ancient Christian writers in comparing John's Gospel with the other three Gospels. Such comparisons inevitably led to speculation on John's purpose for writing yet another Gospel, and one that is so different from the others.[5] John's purpose and even method of composition also provided further speculation impinging on the date and place of writing as well as the authorship of the Gospel. This, in turn, directly influenced the Gospel's reception in the commentary, homiletic and liturgical traditions of those early centuries. This introduction is limited to exploring these issues, since these are among the primary introductory matters that concerned the ancient Christian writers' approach to the text.

---

[1]See Augustine *Harmony of the Gospels* 1.6.9 (NPNF 1 6:80). Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.11.8 (ANF 1:428-29) identifies John with the lion, signifying his royal power, but most other early Christian writers identify John with the eagle.

[2]Augustine *Harmony of the Gospels* 4.10.11 (NPNF 1 6:231-32). For John as the eagle, see also *Harmony on the Gospels* 1.6 (NPNF 1 6:80-81) and *Tractate on the Gospel of John* 36 (NPNF 1 7:208).

[3]Chrysostom *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 1.1 (NPNF 1 14:4).

[4]Maurice F. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 1.

[5]The overlapping material between John and the other Gospels is only about 10 percent.

John's Purpose in Relation to Other Gospels

When the early Christian writers speak of John's purpose in writing the Gospel, it is always in relation to the other Gospels. This is evident, for instance, in the following fragment from the second-century Muratorian Canon, one of the earliest accounts of the Fourth Gospel's composition:

> The Fourth Gospel is that of John, one of the disciples. When his fellow-disciples and bishops entreated him, he said, "Fast now with me for the space of three days, and let us recount to each other whatever may be revealed to us." On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John should narrate all things in his own name as they called them to mind. And so, although different points are taught to us in the several books of the Gospels, there is no difference as regards the faith of believers, since in all of them everything is related under one imperial Spirit. . . . John professes himself to be not only the eye-witness, but also the hearer; and besides that, the historian of all the wondrous facts concerning the Lord in their order.[6]

This fragment represents one part of a tradition passed down and expanded on by Christian interpreters throughout the early centuries of the church, which held that the Gospel of John was composed for two main reasons. The first of these reasons concerns the historical character of John. As early as Papias, it was noted that the writers of the other Gospels, such as Mark, wrote accurately, "though not in order, of the things either said or done by Christ."[7] John, however, was viewed according to this fragment as the "eyewitness" and "historian" among the four Gospel writers. The Fourth Gospel provided the historical framework for the narrative of Jesus' life in which the accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Synoptic Gospels, were fitted.[8] Most ancient Christian writers assume that John had the other three Gospels in his possession as he composed his Gospel, filling in information they had left out or including similar narratives but bringing out their theological significance, as in the case of John 6, for instance, and the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand that is coupled with the later discourse about the bread of life.[9] These early commentators were not unaware, however, of the difficulties raised in comparing John with the Synoptic Gospels.

An early heretical sect called the Alogoi based their rejection of the Fourth Gospel on the difficulties inherent in reconciling John's chronology with that of the other three.[10] But others, such as Irenaeus, viewed this discrepancy as an asset. Irenaeus noticed early on that it is John's Gospel, for instance, with his three, or maybe even four, references to Jesus going up to the Passover feast[11] that enable us to comprehend a two or three-year ministry for Jesus instead of the one year seemingly indicated by the Synoptic Gospels.[12] Many, although not all, of the signs that John includes in proving Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, are

[6]Fragments of Caius 3.1, *Muratorian Canon* (ANF 5:603).

[7]Fragment of Papias in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39 (*AF* 569).

[8]Theodore asserted that John was "extremely precise in weaving his narrative in an orderly way" (CSCO 4 3:4-5).

[9]Ibid. Theodore notes that "the others also related this miracle, but John necessarily reported this event for the speech connected to it, in which [the Lord] also said words about the mysteries [sacrament]."

[10]Epiphanius of Salamis *Panarion* 51.4 (NHMS 36:27-29).

[11]Jn 2:13; 6:4; 11:55; perhaps also Jn 2:23.

[12]Unique to Irenaeus, he assumes Jesus was close to fifty at the time of his death. See his comment on John 8:57; *Against Heresies* 2.22.6 (ANF 1:392). Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius and other early Fathers accepted a one-year ministry for Jesus (NPNF 2 1:153 n. 8). Eusebius of Caesarea opined that the Synoptic Gospels "recorded only the deeds done by the Savior for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist" and that John then "records the deeds of Christ which were performed before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three evangelists mention the events which happened after that time"; *Ecclesiastical History* 3.24.8, 12-13 (NPNF 2 1:153). Contra Eusebius, however, a more plausible explanation would be that the Synoptic accounts are scattered over the three-year ministry outlined in John.

not included in the other Gospels. The miracle at the wedding of Cana,[13] the healing of the man born blind[14] and the raising of Lazarus are found only in John.[15] But John also leaves out other central events such as the transfiguration and the account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, or perhaps includes them in a more indirect but theologically significant way.[16] There are other memorable discourses such as the good shepherd,[17] the vine and the branches,[18] Jesus' high-priestly prayer,[19] the account of Jesus washing the disciples' feet[20] and Mary's encounter with Jesus at the tomb,[21] for which our understanding of the Savior would be impoverished had they not been included by John. And, of course, John himself says that he has only scratched the surface in what he has included.[22]

These general areas of comparison were easy to reconcile, attributing them to the larger purpose of the author in composing his account of the Gospel. The more minute differences in detail, where discrepancies between the different writers became more apparent, were more difficult to reconcile. Tatian's late-second-century *Diatessaron* was an early attempt to bring the four accounts into a narrative whole, but it is largely the later work of Eusebius of Caesarea, Epiphanius of Salamis and Augustine that provides more substantive, if not always satisfactory, resolutions to the apparent areas of conflict.[23] Often the solution given to a difficulty posits two different occurrences of the event; or, in the case of Jesus' discourse, the solution posits a repetition on more than one occasion of the same phrase or discourse but slightly altered. Eusebius even allows the possibility of a copyist's error, although this is usually a solution of last resort in a list of alternatives.[24]

As one of the most representative interpreters of Alexandrian exegesis, Origen freely admits and even highlights in his commentary extensive disagreements between John and the Synoptics on the historical literal level of the text, a level that he takes more seriously than he is given credit for. He believed the factual differences were designed by the divine author, however, to highlight certain higher spiritual truths. He also felt that the inspired authors were free to rearrange chronological sequences in order to convey the deeper spiritual truth intended.[25] He goes so far as to say spiritual truth was often preserved in seemingly material falsehood,[26] always with the view toward leading one to the higher spiritual sense.[27] The fact that historical disagreements could not always be harmonized necessitated, in his mind, the use of allegory to arrive at the deeper spiritual truths intended. These disagreements served as divine sign posts

[13]Jn 2:1-11.
[14]Jn 9.
[15]Jn 11.
[16]See comments on Jn 1:14 and Jn 6 respectively.
[17]Jn 10.
[18]Jn 15.
[19]Jn 17.
[20]Jn 13.
[21]Jn 20.
[22]Jn 20:30.
[23]See Eusebius *Quaestiones Evangelicae* (PG 22:877-1016); Epiphanius *Panarion* 51.5-31 (NHMS 36:29-63); Augustine *Harmony of the Gospels* (NPNF 1 6:64-236).
[24]Eusebius *Quaestiones ad Marinum* 2.7 (PG 22:948B); *Supplementa Minora Quaestionum ad Marinum* 4 (PG 22:1009B), cited in Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 14.
[25]Origen *Commentary on John* 10.18-20 (FC 80:259-60).
[26]Ibid.
[27]See many instances in Origen's *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 10.10-209 (FC 80:256-301).

to the reader that there must be more to the text than meets the eye.

Theodore of Mopsuestia represents the Antiochene exegetical tradition, which is no less concerned with these perceived problems but whose answer lies not in an allegorical solution but with a closer historical-grammatical analysis. He posits, for instance, that the events of John 1—3 must have happened before the accounts of Jesus' ministry contained in the other three Gospels.[28] He also notes that the exact dating of the wedding of Cana that John provides only goes to prove that the temptation could not have followed immediately on Jesus' baptism, historically speaking.[29] Also, the cleansing of the temple John records must be a different one than that recorded in the Synoptics.[30] Theodore attributes other factual discrepancies to the fact that Matthew and John were eyewitnesses, whereas Mark and Luke relied on the testimony of others. This is especially true of the passion account, where John remained when the others fled. If there are points of disagreement in details, Theodore asserts, this establishes the veracity of the accounts since it shows that there was no collusion between the various writers.

In general, patristic writers understood everything narrated under the Gospels as "related under one imperial Spirit."[31] Since the Gospel accounts were divinely inspired by the one divine Author, they could not be in contradiction with each other. It is doubtful that the Johannine account of Jesus' life would have survived and flourished as it did had it not been found in agreement with the other three. The Fourth Gospel's historical accuracy, its attention to detail and its inclusion of narratives and discourse not found in other accounts commended itself to the church even if it was not always able to find a satisfactory resolution by today's standards. But this was not the church's primary focus when considering John's purpose for writing his Gospel. Cyril of Alexandria, for example, spends precious little time on harmonizing, and largely ignores issues of chronology. And yet, where he does notice differences in details he goes to great lengths to resolve them because if the Evangelists agree with one another on issues of importance they would most assuredly agree on insignificant matters.[32] As Wiles notes, "Cyril's strength as a commentator lies, therefore, not so much in the way in which he meets the detailed problem of the relation between John and the Synoptics but rather in his comparative readiness to ignore it."[33] Cyril's focus was on something else that was much deeper.

The Divinity of Christ in John

An earlier commentator from Alexandria, Clement, catches the true allure of the Fourth Gospel when he writes of the second purpose for John's composition, "But last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel."[34] A "spiritual Gospel" could mean any number of things in our day—also true in the Alexan-

---

[28]The statement in John 3:24 that John the Baptist had not yet been cast into prison was decisive on this point for Theodore. The events of chapters 2 and 3, in this case, would have happened before the start of his ministry described in the Synoptics (CSCO 4 3:75-76).

[29]See comments at Jn 2:1ff. See also Epiphanius *Panarion* 51.13-20 (NHMS 36:37-45).

[30]CSCO 43:76. Chrysostom makes a similar assertion. See *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 23.2 (NPNF 1 14:80-81).

[31]Fragments of Caius 3.1, *Muratorian Canon* (ANF 5:603).

[32]See, for example, Cyril's comments on Jn 19:29 seeking to resolve the sponge of vinegar on a reed and on hyssop; *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* 12 (LF 48:636).

[33]Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel,* 19.

[34]Clement of Alexandria *Hypotyposes* as quoted in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.7 (NPNF 2 1:261).

drian tradition of Clement's day. The Gospel of John was very popular among the Gnostics there and elsewhere who found numerous opportunities via allegorizing for utilizing John in their cosmological speculations. Clement and his pupil Origen were not averse to this allegorizing either since it allowed their own cosmological speculations. However, it was John's emphasis on the divinity of Christ that moved Origen to call the Fourth Gospel the "first-fruits"[35] of all the apostolic Gospel accounts. He noted that it was left to the one who lay on Jesus' breast to provide the greatest and most complete discourses about Jesus, "For none of these other Gospels plainly declared his divinity as John does."[36] This agrees in part with what John himself says in John 20: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."[37] Patristic discussion on John's purpose focused primarily on the first phrase of John's stated purpose, the belief stated as fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.[38] In fact, they assume that John was already engaged in battling heretical notions about Christ in his own time at the end of the first century.

Irenaeus relates a tradition preserved by John's disciple, Polycarp of Smyrna, that tells how John once fled from the public baths in Ephesus when he heard that the Gnostic Cerinthus had entered. John left because he was afraid "the bath-house would fall down since Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, was within."[39] Jerome too reflects this animosity between John and Cerinthus, saying that John was asked by the bishops of Asia to write a Gospel "against Cerinthus and other heretics and especially against the then growing dogma of the Ebionites, who assert that Christ did not exist before Mary. On this account [John] was compelled to maintain [Christ's] divine nativity."[40] Irenaeus believed that John wrote his Gospel anticipating Irenaeus's conflicts in the late second century with the Valentinian Gnostics and their "blasphemous systems that divide the Lord" into two different beings, one human and the other divine.[41]

The divinity of Jesus was of paramount importance, not only in the second and third centuries of the church but even more so later when the church was struggling with the trinitarian and christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. Theodore avers that the Christians of Asia asked John to write because certain miracles and discourses were missing in the other Gospels that might lead future generations to lose sight of Christ's divinity.[42] Cyril's account is similar, although for him the danger of false teaching concerning the eternal generation of the Son and the preexistence of the Logos that John combats is a clear and present danger for John at the end of the first century.[43] Cyril reports that John left the genealogy of the legal and natural birth according to the flesh to the other Evangelists to tell at fuller length, while he focused on Christ's divinity to correct present and future heresies.[44] Chrysostom too believed that John was

[35]Gk *aparchē*.
[36]Origen *Commentary on John* 1.22 (FC 80:37*).
[37]Jn 20:31.
[38]See Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 10-11.
[39]Recorded in Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.3.4 (ANF 1:416).
[40]NPNF 2 3:364.
[41]Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.16.5 (ANF 1:442-43).
[42]Theodore *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, introduction (CSCO 4 3:3-4).
[43]Cyril *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* 1, Preface (LF 43:9).
[44]Cyril *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* 1, Preface (LF 43:10).

"loftier than the rest."[45] And yet, it is Chrysostom's *Homilies on John* that, more than any other commentary, emphasizes Christ's humanity and condescension toward the human race.[46]

This distinction between the human and divine elements in the one person of Jesus Christ became a key hermeneutical tool in the christological interpretation of John that the orthodox used to answer the challenges of varying heretical sects. It took some time before this distinction was enunciated clearly. But it ultimately became standardized in the orthodox confessions of the church, as the Nicene Creed and subsequent ecumenical councils demonstrate. Those passages that seemed to speak of Christ's inferiority to the Father were applied to his humanity in its incarnate status, and those more exalted passages that spoke of his glory and power were applied to his divinity, keeping in mind that when you speak of either, you are speaking of the one person of Jesus Christ who is both human and divine which they saw epitomized in Jesus' statement, "I and the Father are one."[47]

The ancient church was agreed, then, that the primary purpose of the Gospel according to John was to remove any doubt about the doctrinal truth of Christ's divinity, which the other Gospels had not emphasized. John's Gospel thus occupied a central role in the trinitarian and christological debates. This made it all the more important that the Gospel itself could be trusted.

Date, Provenance and Authorship

Date and Provenance. For reasons that will become clear below, the Gospel of John was not as widely quoted as Matthew in the early years of the church.[48] It nonetheless has some of the earliest attestation in the papyri of the New Testament. The oldest manuscript of any portion of the New Testament known to exist, 𝔓[52], dates from the early second century and contains John 18:31-33, 37-38.[49] This textual "footprint in the sand" attests to John's usage far from Ephesus already in Egypt perhaps as early as A.D. 130, clearly contradicting the assumptions of such nineteenth-century critics as Ferdinand Christian Baur who placed John's composition as late as A.D. 160.[50] Allowing some time for copying and circulation this would place the composition of the Gospel sometime close to the end of the first century A.D., where the consensus of ancient Christian writers and historians place it. Jerome refines the timetable a bit further in his *Lives of Illustrious Men* 9:

After Domitian had been put to death and his acts, on account of his excessive cruelty, were annulled by the

[45]Chrysostom *Homily on Matthew* 1.7 (NPNF 1 10:3).

[46]Chrysostom *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 63.2 (NPNF 1 14:233). He notes, for instance, the emotion Jesus showed in the raising of Lazarus, whereas during the passion Jesus seems in total control. Thus, sandwiched between the sublime prologue and the triumphant crucifixion and resurrection is a humble Jesus who still provides numerous glimpses of his divinity.

[47]Jn 10:30. For a thorough discussion of christological interpretation in John, see Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel,* 112-47.

[48]Cf. Manlio Simonetti's introduction to *Matthew,* ACCS NT 1a:xxxvii.

[49]Fragment 457 in the John Rylands Library of Manchester.

[50]See Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament,* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 38-39. Metzger notes that Diessmann was convinced that the papyrus was written well within the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117-38) and perhaps during the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98-117). See also Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1981), 687; *EEC* 1:448 and Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII,* Anchor Bible 29 (New York: Doubleday, 1966) lxxxii-lxxxiii. Two other of the earliest papyri, 𝔓[66], which some have placed in the first half of the second century, and 𝔓[75], in the latter half of the second century, include much more extensive texts from John. The papyri are not otherwise closely related to one another, evidencing an early and wide circulation of the Gospel in the first half, if not the first quarter, of the second century. See Herbert Hunger, "Zur Datierung des Papyrus Bodmer II (P66)," *Anziger der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften,* phil.-hist. KL., number 4 (1960), 12-33, cited in Metzger, 40 n.1.

> senate, John returned to Ephesus under Nerva[51] and continuing there until the time of the emperor Trajan, founded and built churches throughout all Asia. Worn out by old age, he died in the sixty-eighth year after our Lord's passion and was buried near the same city.[52]

This would place John's death right around A.D. 100, the latest possible date for the writing of the Gospel if we accept the apostle John as the author.[53]

The earliest possible date for the Gospel's composition is not as easily answered, since both the internal and external evidence can be interpreted in a number of ways. The witness of the ancient church attests that the Gospel of John was written after the other three Gospels, implying a later date, depending on how one dates the other Gospels.[54] However, we can be more precise if we consider Jerome's account above to be accurate. He notes that John wrote the Apocalypse on the island of Patmos and then returned to Ephesus during the reign of Nerva. We know that Nerva ruled as emperor of Rome from A.D. 96 to 98. Further, we learn from Ireneaus that "John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia."[55] Therefore, at least according to the witness of Irenaeus and Jerome,[56] we can place the writing of the Gospel at Ephesus sometime within the last half of the final decade of the first century (A.D. 96-100). Apart from the dissenting view of Ephrem the Syrian, who records a tradition that John wrote his Gospel at Antioch, where he lived until the end of Trajan's reign,[57] the patristic consensus was that John wrote the Gospel from Ephesus.

But this also has implications for the Gospel's relation to the Revelation, which we also assume was written by John.[58] Clement of Alexandria says that John, who was exiled to Patmos, returned to Ephesus "after the death of the tyrant."[59] If the Revelation, then, was written on the island of Patmos and the Gospel was written in Ephesus, it would mean either that John wrote the Gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos, which is highly unlikely given the earlier evidence discussed, or the Gospel was composed when John returned to Ephesus after his exile. Therefore, John composed the Fourth Gospel *after* he wrote the Revelation on the island of Patmos.

This would help explain a number of hermeneutical questions, including the profound prologue of the first eighteen verses in terms that go beyond a simple Hellenistic or Jewish influence, although these no

---

[51]See NPNF 2 3:364 n. 1. "Pertinax" cannot be correct since his reign was from A.D. 192 to 193. The Latin favors a reading of "Nerva," as does the later account by George the Sinner (see also Cetedoc 0616, 9.13.28).

[52]Jerome *Lives of Illustrious Men* 9 (NPNF 2 3:364-65*). See also *Fragments of Papias* 6 (*AF* 573), which records a similar account by George the Sinner (ninth century).

[53]See below and further discussion by Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII,* lxxx-lxxxiii.

[54]Although there is also considerable debate as to when these Gospels were written.

[55]*Against Heresies* 3.1.1 (ANF 1:414); see also the Anti-Marcionite and Monarchian prologues.

[56]See also Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 2.22.5; 3.3.4 (ANF 1:381-92; 416); Clement of Alexandria *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved* 42 (ANF 2:603).

[57]Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel,* 8, who cites J. N. Sanders, *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 7, although Sanders later posits neither Ephesus nor Antioch but Alexandria as the place of origin for the Gospel. He is virtually alone in this supposition, and his evidence is largely circumstantial, citing the early Egyptian manuscripts of John, its use by Alexandrian Gnostics and the fact that Alexandria was the home of Philo, whose Jewish doctrine of the Logos is echoed in the prologue. See Sanders, *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church,* 39-41.

[58]See the discussion below under authorship.

[59]*Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved* 42 (ANF 2:603). See also the history of Hegesippus (b. A.D. 110) in Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.18.1-5; 3.20.9-10; 3.23.1-5 (NPNF 2 1:148-50) which must have been the source for Jerome's account concerning Nerva. See Simon J. Kistemaker, *Revelation,* The New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 28.

doubt are there and are important influences. The prologue's cosmological glimpse into the eternity of the Word and the heavenly realms as John entered through that open door into heaven seems much more prescient when reading the first eighteen verses of John with the Revelation as the backdrop. It also lends a renewed appreciation for the certainty and conviction, evident throughout the rest of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ was truly God and man. We have an eyewitness who had seen his glory not only on earth but perhaps also in heaven.[60]

Authorship. The text of the Gospel never identifies the author explicitly by name,[61] allowing for speculation concerning his identity, although little such speculation occurred in the early church. In the Gospel itself there are enigmatic references to the "other disciple"[62] who was a friend of the high priest and "the beloved disciple"[63] who was an eyewitness.[64] This disciple was obviously a close companion of Jesus, being present at the crucifixion to witness the piercing of Christ's side.[65] This convinced most ancient commentators (if not all modern ones)[66] that these references identified the author as John, the disciple of Jesus. In fact, the identity of John the disciple is simply assumed in the commentaries without further discussion on the matter except to highlight John's modesty in not naming himself.[67]

Whether he was the same John who wrote the book of Revelation or Second John and Third John was not as unanimous an assertion, however, although the early majority, including Justin,[68] Irenaeus,[69] Tertullian,[70] Hippolytus[71] and Origen[72] seemed to think so, as did the later consensus of interpreters on the Revelation.[73] Papias of Hierapolis was considered by many to be a disciple of John whom later tradition believed may have been John's scribe.[74] Much has thus been made of Eusebius's assertion that Papias identified two Johns at Ephesus: John the apostle, who wrote the Gospel, and John the elder, who is referred to in Second John and Third John and who Eusebius said must have written the Revelation.[75] However, there is also nothing to prevent one from seeing these two Johns listed in Papias as the same person, especially consider-

---

[60]See Jn 1:14.

[61]The omission of the author's name provides a strong argument against pseudonymity since those who composed such works usually chose a well-known name to try and establish authenticity.

[62]Jn 18:15-16.

[63]Jn 20:2; 21:7, 20.

[64]Jn 1:14. Cyril quotes the verse in the singular form ("I beheld") but applies it to John's spiritual understanding, not his historical testimony. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel,* 10.

[65]Jn 19:35; cf. Jn 1:14; 1 Jn 1:1-3.

[66]There are any number of modern commentators one can turn to who posit a Johannine school or other later reworkings of the material. There are also any number of hypotheses for the identity of the "beloved disciple" that propose someone outside the apostolic circle, including, among others, Lazarus, whom it is said Jesus loved, or Paul. On the whole, these hypotheses, often quite ingenious, lack coherence within the internal evidence of the Gospel and find little external support in either the early commentary tradition or external historical sources. For a helpful summary and critique of critical scholarship concerning Johannine authorship, see Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary,* vol. 1 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 81-139.

[67]See, for instance, Chrysostom *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 83.2 (NPNF 1 14:308); Cyril *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 11.12 (LF 48:579-80).

[68]Justin Martyr *Dialogue with Trypho* 81 (ANF 1:178).

[69]Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 4.20.11 (ANF 1:491).

[70]Tertullian *Against Marcion* 3.24 (*TAM* 1:247).

[71]Hippolytus *On the Antichrist* 36 (ANF 5:211).

[72]Origen *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 2.45 (FC 80:106).

[73]See William Weinrich's introduction to *Revelation,* ACCS NT 12, xvii-xx, which I consulted for the above references.

[74]Fragments of Papias 19 (Codex Vaticanus Alexandrinus 14 [ninth century]) (*AF* 585). See also Fragment 20, which reflects the same tradition among the fragments of the Greek fathers on John.

[75]See Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.1-8 (NPNF 2 1:170-72).

ing the antipathy of Eusebius toward the Revelation being included in the canon.[76]

Other early patristic writers such as Theophilus of Antioch identify the author of the Prologue as John, one of the "spirit-bearing [inspired] men,"[77] although he too does not explicitly identify him as John the disciple of the Lord. The Valentinian Ptolemaeus, as quoted by Irenaeus, is more explicit, identifying "John, the disciple of the Lord" as the author of the prologue,[78] as does the Valentinian Heracleon, as quoted by Origen.[79] Both Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria are quoted by Eusebius as favoring John the disciple of Jesus as the author.[80] Tertullian, the father of Latin Christian theology, supplies a similar witness to that of Irenaeus and Clement.[81] Bishop Polycrates of Ephesus[82] confirms that the apostle John is the beloved disciple who "was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined on the bosom of the Lord." He further attests to John's occupying the priestly office, having worn "the sacerdotal plate."[83] And finally, two other accounts in this early period are that of the anti-Marcionite prologue and the *Muratorian Canon*. The anti-Marcionite prologue speaks of the Gospel as dictated by John to his disciple Papias "while still in the body," implying something akin to a last will and testament by an aged disciple. [84] The *Muratorian Canon*, already noted, refers to the author as "John, one of the disciples" who was encouraged by his fellow disciples to write down his recollections.[85] The commentaries of the fourth and fifth centuries continued this consensual understanding among the ancient exegetes that John the apostle and disciple of Jesus was the author of the Gospel.

The Reception of John in the Ancient Christian Community in the Second Century

Considering the attestation in the manuscript tradition and the overwhelming consensus that John the apostle and disciple was the author of the Gospel, we are nonetheless confronted with a conundrum in its early usage. The Gospel of John is barely quoted or cited until well into the second half of the second century among the apostolic fathers. Ignatius of Antioch (d. 107 or 112), for instance, who wrote a letter to the Ephesians, where the Gospel of John would have been composed, makes no reference or overt allusions to the Gospel in that letter.[86] Justin Martyr, with his concept of the Logos,[87] nonetheless has only one complete citation from John, quoting John 3:5 in his *First Apology* 61, although again there are any number of

---

[76]See Keener's discussion in *The Gospel of John*, 1:95-98. Eusebius's motives in positing two Johns may have had more to do with his concern over the authorship of Revelation than the authorship of the Gospel since he himself shows no reservation in attributing the authorship of the Gospel to John the disciple. He does, however, have reservations about Revelation's canonical status.

[77]Theophilus *To Autolycus* 2.22 (ANF 2:103).

[78]Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.8.5 (ANF 1:328).

[79]Origen *Commentary on John* 6.13 (FC 80:171). Origen is refuting Heracleon's assertion that Jn 1:18 was said by the disciple rather than by John the Baptist, where it would seem that Heracleon was more in line with patristic interpretation than Origen.

[80]Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.23.1-5 (NPNF 2 1:150).

[81]*Against Marcion* 4.2, 5 (ANF 3:347, 350).

[82]A contemporary of Irenaeus, who wrote to Victor of Rome during the last decade of the second century on the Asian customs concerning the date of Pascha.

[83]Gk *hiereus to petalon* (TLG 2018.002, 5.24.3); Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 5.24.3 (NPNF 2 1:242).

[84]*Revue Bénédictine* 40 (1928), 198, cited in Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel*, 7.

[85]Fragments of Caius 3.1, *Muratorian Canon* (ANF 5:603).

[86]Mark Edwards, *John*, Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 2, although, as Edwards notes, two premises of the John's Gospel, Christ as the Word or Logos of the Father and the inscrutable workings of the Spirit, were commonplace in his writings. See also *EEC* 1:448.

[87]There is considerable debate on the source of Justin's Logos teaching. See D. T. Runic, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993), 97-105; also Mark Edwards, "Justin's Logos and the Word of God," *JECS* 3 (1995):262-67.

allusions.[88] Another citation of the Gospel does not occur until Theophilus of Antioch quotes John 1:1-3 in his *To Autolycus* 2.22 (c. A.D. 170).[89] Whereas there are copious references and quotes of texts from the other three Gospels in these texts, the witness to John is almost silent until the time of Irenaeus. What explains this apparent tardiness of regard for the Fourth Gospel among early postapostolic writings?

One factor could be the late composition of the Gospel, having been written at the very end of the first century, which means it would have taken more time to circulate. Arguing against this, however, is the manuscript evidence that shows the Gospel had an early and wide circulation from as far away as Egypt.[90] Perhaps its later composition caused some delay in accepting its authority until it proved itself. Its link to Ephesus and to an apostle such as John would seem to militate against this as well, however. Perhaps we have a clue in an enigmatic statement of Epiphanius of Salamis, who mentions, in his *Panarion* 51.3-4, the second-century sect known as the Alogoi,[91] who rejected the book of John early on because they believed that neither the Gospel of John nor the Apocalypse was

> John's composition but Cerinthus', and have no right to a place in the church. . . . Cerinthus says that Christ is of recent origin and a mere man. . . . [The Alogoi] appear to believe what we do; but . . . they do not hold to the certainties of the message God has revealed to us through St. John. . . . For they say . . . that John's books do not agree with the other apostles.[92]

Epiphanius says that the Alogoi appear to believe the same things the orthodox do, except concerning John, giving us a glimpse into the early-second-century reception of John at least in some parts of the ancient world. Some of the reticence to utilize John resulted from the notable differences in content between the Fourth Gospel and the other three. But the association with Cerinthus was perhaps a bigger stumbling block. We do know from Irenaeus that Cerinthus was considered to be a Gnostic who taught a "'knowledge' falsely so called."[93] According to Irenaeus, as we saw earlier, John appears to have engaged in spiritual warfare with Cerinthus specifically. We may perhaps conjecture that Cerinthus was using John's Gospel as if it were his own but distorting its message.[94] This would explain John's focused animosity toward him as one who was distorting the truth. We also know that the Gospel according to John enjoyed popularity among Gnostic and Montanist circles that it did not have among the orthodox of the same period.[95] The Nag Hammadi Library, known for its collection of second- and third-century Gnostic[96] texts such as the *Gospel of Truth, Apocryphon of John, Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Philip* and *Tripartite Tractate* contains

[88]ANF 1:183. While the Logos was a well-known principle in Jewish wisdom tradition and John's contemporary Philo, as well as Stoicism and middle Platonism, it is nonetheless surprising that Justin did not appeal to the Gospel of John for his Logos doctrine in order to bolster his argument; although perhaps attribution was not his primary concern.

[89]ANF 2:103.

[90]See above.

[91]Since the Gospel of John was known for its use of the Word or Logos in the prologue, they became known as the *Alogoi* (lit., "not Logos").

[92]Epiphanius, *Panarion* 51.3.6-4.5 (NHMS 36:27-28).

[93]*Against Heresies* 3.11.1 (ANF 1:426).

[94]Caius *Fragment* 2 (ANF 5:601), says that Cerinthus appealed to revelations written by a great apostle, who people may have assumed to have been John. He is also known for his millennial teaching, which could easily be linked with the Apocalypse of John.

[95]The Montanists were especially interested in those passages concerning the Paraclete, which they felt authorized them for their own charismatic ministry. See Ronald Heine, "The Role of the Gospel of John in the Montanist Controversy," *Second Century* 6 (1987-1988):1-19.

[96]I use this term in the broadest sense since recent scholarship has shown it is difficult to speak of one monolithic Gnosticism.

copious allusions, references and quotes from the Gospel of John, unlike its orthodox counterparts in the same time period.[97]

The first known commentary on any New Testament text is, in fact, a commentary on John written by Heracleon, a pupil of the Gnostic Valentinus, around A.D. 160 to 180. The subsequent popularity of this Gnostic commentary can be inferred from Ambrose, a converted Valentinian Gnostic,[98] who commissioned his most talented scholar, Origen of Alexandria, to write a commentary exposing and refuting Heracleon's error.[99] Origen quotes Heracleon's commentary extensively, and therefore some partial reconstruction of it has been possible.[100] Nevertheless it is not certain that Heracleon had written a complete commentary. What is significant in this case is that Heracleon's knowledge of John must be traced back to his teacher Valentinus, who was a contemporary of Polycarp. The same applies to other fellow Valentinians, beside Heracleon, most notably to Ptolemaeus and his followers, who are quoted on this point by Irenaeus.[101] Ultimately, we must admit we don't know why John was underutilized by the postapostolic ancient Christian writers. It is more likely a combination of its late composition coupled with its popularity among the more dominant Gnostic sects of the time. The paucity of early usage among the orthodox, however, would not remain so for long.

Irenaeus, who wrote *Against Heresies* most likely sometime between A.D. 175 and 185, is the one who sought to reappropriate the Gospel of John, bringing it firmly back within the orthodox fold. He affirms its apostolic authorship on numerous occasions in this work and cites it more than sixty times in his polemical arguments against the very Gnostics who so widely used John.[102] He tells us that John wrote the Gospel to put an end to such Gnostic doctrines as Cerinthus and Valentinus held, affirming the divinity of Christ and establishing "the rule of truth in the church."[103] Thus, with Irenaeus we see the beginning of the Fourth Gospel's reappropriation that only strengthened as the ancient church discovered the treasures contained in it.

The Commentaries of the Third Century

Two commentaries on John are known to have been written in the third century: the above-mentioned commentary of Origen and another written by Hippolytus no longer extant.[104] Both commentaries were written to refute heretical distortions of the Gospel and to expound orthodoxy. Hippolytus fought the heresy of the Alogoi while Origen dealt with Gnosticism and, more specifically, its undermining of the integrity of the incarnation that was basic to the church's understanding of Christ.

---

[97]Irenaeus gives an example of how the Gnostics used John, especially the prologue, in *Against Heresies* 1.8.5. For those interested in the Gnostic texts, I recommend the *Gospel of Truth* as one of the more accessible examples. See James M. Robinson, gen. ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 40-51.

[98]As distinguished from Ambrose of Milan, who was a fourth-century bishop and mentor of Augustine.

[99]See Ronald Heine's introduction to *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Books 1-10,* trans. Ronald Heine (FC 80; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1989), 5-7.

[100]There are forty-eight citations of Heracleon's text in Origen. For the text, see. A. E. Brooks, *The Fragments of Heracleon, Texts and Studies* I, 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891; reprint, Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2004).

[101]See *Against Heresies* 1.8.5 (ANF 1:328), although "Ptolemaeus" is not found in the Greek text; *Against Heresies* 1.12.1 would seem to indicate this is who Irenaeus had in mind.

[102]*Against Heresies* 3.11.7 (ANF 1:428).

[103]*Against Heresies* 3.11.1 (ANF 1:426).

[104]Hippolytus's commentary is mentioned in a list of his works found in an early statue that depicts him, but we also know it from certain extracts from it that are cited by other authors.

Origen of Alexandria. Origen completed the first five books of his commentary in Alexandria, performing the rest of the work in Caesarea, where he transferred his activities in A.D. 231 due to conflicts with his bishop, Demetrios. The text that has come down to us is not complete: not only are there large gaps within the text itself, due to the fragmentary nature of the surviving text, but also the commentary we do have ends with book 32, bringing us only as far as John 13.[105] Origen most likely never did complete what he called the "first fruits" of his exegetical works. Nevertheless, what we have is sufficient to demonstrate how important the Gospel of John had become at the time for the church, especially in Alexandria, one of the great ecclesiastical and philosophical centers at that time. His commentary also helps explain the subsequent emphasis placed on this Gospel in the church's lectionary, liturgy and dogmatic formulations.

Origen's commentary, unlike for instance Chrysostom's or Augustine's sermons on John, has a kind of freedom often found in the academy in general that leaves behind exhortation and sermonic exposition in order to pursue a specific subject or text—sometimes almost to the point of exhaustion. One gets the impression with Origen that there are so many questions he had, and so much Scripture to connect with the Gospel of John, that there is neither time nor space enough to get it all in the thirty-two books written by him that cover barely half of the Gospel. That is why the quotes contained in this commentary are often elided or condensed to bring out his main points, which themselves often are quite insightful but would otherwise be lost in the details. He provides a wealth of knowledge concerning issues of textual criticism, and his commentary exhibits one of the most careful treatments of the text of any of the interpreters. He often notices textual or factual issues others gloss over, as noted earlier. Historical facts were obviously important to Origen, but they are not the chief concern of scriptural narrative or its interpretation; to his mind, it is the spiritual meaning underneath the text that the interpreter is to unlock.[106] This "spiritual Gospel" affords ample opportunity for such spiritual exegesis, but it is exegesis that Origen ultimately employs in service to the church at the urging and through the generosity of his friend Ambrose. As the first orthodox commentary on John, Origen's tomes set the tone for much of the subsequent commentary tradition.

The Commentaries of the Fourth Century

Four commentaries appear to have been written in the fourth century, but only one of them has survived in full form. These are the commentaries of Asterius the Sophist, Theodore of Heraclea, Didymus the Blind, of the catechetical school of Alexandria, and John Chrysostom, representing the Antiochene stream of interpretation.

Asterius the Sophist was an Arian, a fact that most probably contributed to the disappearance of his commentary, given the practice of the early church to destroy the works of those condemned as heretics. Theodore of Mopsuestia, a fifth-century biblical commentator, tells us in his introduction to his own commentary on the Fourth Gospel that he was not

[105]For many of the quotes used in this commentary, I have utilized Ronald Heine, trans., *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel According to John,* Books 1-10, 13-32 (FC 80, 89; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1989, 1993). I have also consulted the critical Greek text in Cecil Blanc, trans., *Origene: Commentaire sur Saint Jean,* Tome 1-5 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1966-1992) and at times quoted Origen's *Commentary on John,* Books 1-10 (ANF 9:295-408).

[106]See Origen *Commentary on John* 10-14 (FC 80:256-57).

> envious of the sophist Asterius and that he [Theodore] would not imitate him; for indeed, through the work that he wrote on this Gospel, it seems that he looked more for self-glorification than edification. This volume, which he spread among people, only caused the reader to miss anything that was really useful for the comprehension of the Gospel, because he only lingers on those questions that are evident and fraudulently strives to expose his useless arguments with many words.[107]

Theodore of Heraclea (died c. 351-355), a semi-Arian who opposed Athanasius and was condemned as an opponent at the synod of Sardica,[108] is also reputed to have written a commentary on the Fourth Gospel, also no longer extant. Jerome, who reports on this commentary, praises him for his "polished and clear style and for showing an excellent historical [literal] sense."[109] Theodoret of Cyr calls him "a man of great erudition as an expositor of the Scriptures."[110] Fragments of the commentary of Theodore have survived in the *catenae* of the Greek fathers.[111]

Jerome also tells us that Didymus the Blind (b. 310/313; d. 398), head of the catechetical school of Alexandria, wrote "admirable works," which include a commentary on the Gospel according to John.[112] This commentary is no longer extant either, but several extracts from it too have survived in the same *Catenae*.[113] Palladius of Helenopolis, one of our important sources for Didymus's life and work, says that Didymus "interpreted the Old and the New Testaments word for word and took care for the dogmas [of the church], expounding their rationale in a refined and most powerful way so that he excelled in knowledge among the ancients."[114]

The *catenae* that recall these fourth-century commentaries also include a commentary on the Fourth Gospel by Apollinaris of Laodicaea,[115] a defender of Nicaea and one-time friend of Basil of Caesarea. Apollinaris, however, was judged to be heretical for his attempts to resolve christological issues by substituting the Logos for Christ's soul in an attempt to speak of the human and the divine coexisting in the one person. A number of texts from each of these lost commentaries will appear in translation in this volume for the first time.

John Chrysostom. The last commentary on the Gospel according to John to be written in the fourth century is that of John Chrysostom.[116] It is not so much a commentary as a series of eighty-eight homilies delivered to a select, biblically well-informed audience in a church in Antioch twice a week early in the morning. These homilies cover the entire Gospel with the exception of the incident with the adulterous woman

[107]CSCO 4 3:2.
[108]Cf. Theodoret *Ecclesiastical History* 1.26 (NPNF 2 3:61). See also NPNF 2 4:xlv.
[109]Jerome *Lives of Illustrious Men* 90 (NPNF 2 3:379).
[110]Theodoret *Ecclesiastical History* 2.2 (NPNF 2 3:66).
[111]The text used for this commentary is Joseph Reuss, *Johannes-Kommentare aus der Griechischen Kirche* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966), 65-176. Hereafter cited as *JKGK*.
[112]*Lives of Illustrious Men* 109 (NPNF 2 3:381).
[113]The text we have used is *JKGK* 177-86.
[114]See his *Lausiac History* (PG 34:1012-17).
[115]The text used is in *JKGK* 3-64.
[116]The primary text I have used for the commentary is Philip Schaff, ed., *Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of St. John* (NPNF 1 14:1-334). I have used this text with frequent updating of the translation because of its wide availability for readers who may want to look at the fuller text. In a few places where noted, I have also used the translation by Sister Thomas Aquinas Coggin, *Saint John Chrysostom: Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist* (FC 33, 41; reprint, 1969, 1992; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1957, 1959). The Greek text is that found in PG 59:23-482.

described in John 7:53—8:11, which was not included in Chrysostom's Gospel text. In these homilies (A.D. 387-394),[117] Chrysostom's primary concern is to refute the Anomoeans (extreme Arians), who denied the true Godhead of Christ. But these were also homilies delivered to instruct his audience about the Christian life that would make them equal to the angels if they would only follow his exhortation.[118] His homilies bring the reader of the twenty-first century into the life of late-fourth-century Antioch with their frequent references to the theater, music and athletic spectacles that are in competition for the attention of his hearers. His Christology is very much in the tradition of Antioch in emphasizing the distinction of the two natures. Within that distinction Chrysostom often focuses on the condescension of Christ in his encounters with others and his servanthood in ministering to the world by his life, death and resurrection. Chrysostom often comes across as the most pastoral of the commentators with his exhortations to his readers to not only hear the word but do what it says in their daily lives.

Fifth-Century Commentaries

Four commentaries on the Gospel according to John are reported in the fifth century: Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428); Augustine of Hippo (354-430), written in the first decade of the fifth century; Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), composed during the first period of his literary activity, that is, the period preceding the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy (428); and Ammonius Alexandrinus (fifth to sixth century), written in the second half of the fifth century. By this time the value of the Gospel of John in the trinitarian and christological issues of the day has become more pronounced as reflected in the commentary and homiletic traditions as well as the doctrinal and dogmatic works. Both Hilary's and Augustine's treatises on the Trinity draw heavily on John and therefore have been included in this commentary since their dogmatic arguments were basically exegetical arguments. Earlier interpreters such as Athanasius, Ambrose, Basil and Didymus, among others, also have treatises on the Holy Spirit that focus heavily on Johannine texts and have been included as well at those points where they occur. In this introduction, however, we will focus on the commentary and homiletic tradition.

Theodore of Mopsuestia. Theodore tells us in the introduction to his *Commentary on the Gospel of John the Apostle*[119] that he dedicated this work to a certain Porphyrius, "admirable and most glorious among the bishops," who had "ordered him," as he says, "to explain the sense of the blessed Evangelist John, because the

[117]Some scholars believe that *Homilies on the Gospel of John* preceded the *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew* and followed the *Homilies on the Incomprehensibility of God* (against the Anomoeans), but others believe that they followed the *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew.* Accordingly, they are placed either between 387 and 389 or 390 and 394.

[118]Chrysostom *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 1.2 (NPNF 1 14:2).

[119]The original Greek text of Theodore's commentary has not survived except in fragments, which have been collected and edited by R. Devreesse (see his "Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste," *Studi e Testi* 141 [1948]:289-419; also PG 66:728-85). These fragments have been translated into English by George Kalantzis, *Theodore of Mopsuestia: Commentary on the Gospel of John* in *Early Christian Studies* 7, ed. Pauline Allen (Strathfield: St. Paul's Publications, 2004). Fortunately, a Syriac translation of Theodore's entire commentary was discovered in 1868 in a Syriac manuscript that was first published by Chabot in 1897 and was first translated into Latin in 1940 by J. M. Vosté, *Theodori Mopsuestensi Commentarius in Evangelium Joannis Apostoli, Textus* CSCO 115 (1940), translation CSCO 116 (1940), which is abbreviated CSCO 4 3 in this volume. Latin fragments are also extant and are derived from the Acts of the Second Council of Constantinople (Fifth Ecumenical), which condemned Theodore as a heretic (see J. Straub, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 4.1 [1971]:49, 50, 55 and 59), and from Vigilius's *Constituto* (see O. Günther, CSEL 35, 1:248-50, 261, 266, 267). The present translation we are using was done by Marco Conti from the Syriac text of Vosté's edition, which will be included for the forthcoming Ancient Christian Texts series to be published by InterVarsity Press. There are, however, two other recent translations of Theodore's commentary: that by George Kalantzis, already mentioned, and the other by Robert Bernard in a forthcoming translation that we have also consulted.

comprehension of his thought was more useful than that of others." This elevated description of Porphyrius, coupled with Theodore's characterization of his work as an act of obedience to him, implies that the one who commissioned the work was probably the Porphyrius of Antioch (404-408) who had been formerly his fellow student in the Asketerion of Diodore of Tarsus. This would specify the date of this work, placing it in that period of Porphyrius's term of office as bishop of Antioch.[120]

Theodore's introduction situates his commentary within a certain type of approach or "intention." The focus of his comments, he says, are on those points that appear more difficult for readers to understand while "not lingering on those questions which offer a single interpretation" that is beyond dispute.[121] And so, at various points Theodore's commentary is quite sparse with only a sentence or two of comment on a given passage, while at other points the discussion is much more extensive, such as his extended discussion of the Logos in the opening prologue. Some have seen in Theodore's Christology in general an early tendency toward Nestorianism, where the human and divine natures of Christ are sharply distinguished.[122] However, this commentary, as well as Cyril's, was composed before that controversy erupted. In fact, this separation is absent in most of the Greek fragments of Theodore's commentary that have survived.[123] We have included a few of those Greek fragments where they were considered reliable, although the vast majority of texts included here have come from the Syriac text. The Syriac editor Vosté explains Theodore's Christology as an attempt to highlight the unbelieving Jews perception of only Christ's humanity while those of faith clearly see the greatness of Jesus' divinity.[124]

We have already discussed Theodore's historical-grammatical approach in his harmonization of John's account with that of the Synoptic Gospels. His precision in this regard is also extended to what today might be called form criticism in his terse note that John 21:25-26 was not written by John. On the whole, Theodore's commentary comes across as much more concise, almost surgical at points, in comparison with Cyril.

Cyril of Alexandria. Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John* is one of his earliest works and belongs to the first period of his literary activity, which precedes the outbreak of the Nestorian controversy. It can most likely be dated between the years 425 to 428.[125] The commentary, divided into

[120]I am indebted to Father George Dragas of Holy Cross Seminary (Brookline, Mass.) for these comments.

[121]CSCO 4 3:2.

[122]See F. A. Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1956), 200, where he points out Theodore's concern to safeguard "the divinity of the Word against the Arian dialectic of such exegetes as Asterius." For further discussion of Theodore's Christology and the conflicting opinions surrounding it, see Michael O'Carroll, *Verbum Caro: An Encyclopedia on Jesus, the Christ* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 180-82, and the introduction to Theodore's commentary by George Kalantzis. Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel,* 5-6 n. 3, however, casts some doubt on the authenticity of some of the Greek fragments of the second half of John, which he calls an "epitome rather than direct quotation."

[123]In his appendix, Kalantzis favors the authenticity of the Greek fragments over the Syriac translation, due to the fact that Theodore's commentary may have been co-opted, being reshaped and adapted to a certain degree "to meet the theological needs and expectations of the Nestorian, eastern Syriac churches" (Kalantzis, *Theodore of Mopsuestia,* 153). By the same token, however, Wiles questions whether some of the Greek fragments of the second half of Theodore's commentary "form an epitome rather than direct quotation and are clearly less reliable than the Syriac" (Wiles, *The Spiritual Gospel,* 5-6 n. 3).

[124]CSCO 4 3:6-7.

[125]See Norman Russell, "Cyril of Alexandria," The Early Church Fathers Series, ed. Carol Harrison (Routledge: New York, 2000), 96. As George Dragas notes, George Trapezountios was the first to publish a Latin translation of this commentary in 1508, with the exception of books 5-8.

twelve books, is what might be termed a dogmatic interpretation[126] that presents a doctrinal and theological interpretation of John in order to refute the heresies of Arius, Eunomius, Aetius and their followers who are in error regarding the nature of the second and third persons of the Trinity. His research for two previously published works, his *Dialogues on the Holy Trinity* and his *Thesaurus,* thus served him well in the writing of this commentary since he had made a systematic study of their opinions in these works.[127] His looming conflict with Nestorius, which erupted in 428/429 and came to a head at the Council of Ephesus in 431, is not really in evidence in the commentary, although writing this commentary would have surely prepared him for that christological controversy involving the two natures in the one person of Christ. But there are minimal traces of that controversy here; in fact, there are any number of points where his commentary seems to be in concert with Theodore, Nestorius's teacher.[128]

Cyril's "dogmatic exegesis" might give readers a first impression that he is not writing for the layperson but for the scholar. However, nothing could be farther from the truth. His commentary is scholarly, but his concerns are pastoral as they focus on the salvation of his hearers. In Cyril's mind, the incarnation of Christ is at the heart and core of the Gospel of John and thus of his own commentary and theology. In the incarnation, Christ united himself with human nature, restoring and recalling it to immortality so that "when the flesh had become his own flesh it should partake of his own immortality."[129] The incarnation is a "deep mystery" where the "common element of humanity is summed up" in the person of Jesus Christ, who heals what he has assumed. The Spirit is the one who ensures that humanity receives these benefits of the incarnation.[130] In this regard, Cyril follows very much in the train of Athanasius. But Cyril also goes on to consider those aspects of Christ's humanity that seem to imply an inferiority to the Father, arguing that such things as emotions and suffering, the Spirit's work in him and the glory he receives from the Father do not detract from his divinity but were an accommodation to life lived as a true human being because of his interaction with creation. Cyril's commentary provides the reader with a deeply theological reflection on this most deeply theological Gospel of John.

Augustine of Hippo. Like Chrysostom, Augustine's *Tractates on the Gospel of John*[131] is not so much a com-

Jodocus Clictoveus produced a new edition in 1524 and added long extracts for books 5-8 from John Chrysostom and Augustine. J. Aubert published genuine texts from books 5 and 6 and a few from 7 and 8 in 1638. His edition was reprinted by J. P. Migne in 1859. In 1872 Pusey reprinted this commentary, purging from it texts that were not genuine, but he did not include other genuine extracts surviving in the original Greek and in Syriac translation, some of which are found in *JKGK*. The English translation that we have used, with frequent updating, is that found in the Oxford Movement *Library of the Fathers,* vol. 43, trans. P. E. Pusey (Oxford: J. Parker, 1874), and vol. 48, trans. by Thomas Randell (London: Walter Smith, 1885). David Maxwell is currently working on a new translation of Cyril's commentary from the Greek for the forthcoming Ancient Christian Texts series, which will be published by InterVarsity Press.

[126]*Dogmatikotera exēgēsis*.

[127]Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria,* 97.

[128]See Wiles's comparison of Theodore and Cyril's exegesis, *The Spiritual Gospel,* 129-47.

[129]Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria,* 105.

[130]*Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* 10.2, LF 2:443-44.

[131]The primary text used for this commentary has been the translation of John Gibb and James Innes, *St. Augustine: Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel According to St. John* (NPNF 1 7:7-452). I chose to use this translation, as with Chrysostom, because the text is more easily accessible for the majority of readers, although I have also provided updated translations at many points for readability using R. Willems, *In Johannis euangelium tractatus* CCL 36 (Brepols: Turnhout, 1954). There is also an older Latin version in PL 35:1375-970. Aquinas's *Catena Aurea* also proved helpful in condensing Augustine's thought at times in order to include as much of his salient comments as possible. Where noted, I have also used John Rettig, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* (FC 78, 79, 88, 90, 92; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1988-1995). One may see his bibliography for other current texts and translations.

mentary as a series of 124 homilies, or tractates, on the Gospel of John delivered to his congregation in Hippo sometime after 416. Scholars have debated their precise dating and character, whether they were all delivered at the same time or in groups or whether extemporaneously or dictated.[132] Augustine called them tractates rather than homilies in keeping with earlier Latin usage where tractate (*tractatus*) denotes a certain type of sermon that included not only the original intention of the text but also an interpretation that brought out the wider implications of this meaning for various life situations—something Augustine often explored through his use of allegory. These tractates on John also address theological and polemical issues of the day in their refutation of such heretical opinions as the Manichaeans, Donatists, Arians and Pelagians as these affected the flock entrusted to his care. Concerning that flock, John Rettig paints the scene for the delivery of these tractates:

> Seated upon his *cathedra* in his church at Hippo, with the Bible spread open upon a lectern at his side, Augustine spoke vigorously, with the full dramatic force of ancient oratorical style, directly and immediately to the motley audience standing before him. These volatile and fiery Africans responded to the bishop's words with enthusiastic shouts of approval, or with questions or tears or groans. The sermon was a lively exchange between the pastor and his people; he was ever sensitive and responsive to their reactions and they were quickly influenced by his preaching. Sensibility, impetuosity, a considerable knowledge of doctrine that enabled them to follow complex theological argumentation, and a desire for a firm and unshakeable faith, marked these crowds of people.[133]

It was an eclectic group of rich and poor, young and old, slave and free, politicians and ordinary citizens, educated and uneducated. The exchange between Augustine and his congregation has often necessitated omitting some material in a given quote due to such interruptions but also to the lengthy exposition that sometimes results from a preacher caught in the midst of oratory. Augustine was obviously a trained rhetorician, but he never sacrificed substance for style. As one will see from the excerpts in this volume, his tractates were deeply theological even as they were delivered, for the most part, extemporaneously, recorded by gifted shorthand experts as they were delivered.[134] They serve as a prime example of the richness of doctrinal exegesis and the use of allegory in the West.[135]

We do not know as much about the Presbyter Ammonius of Alexandria[136] and his commentary on John. The fragments of his commentary that have survived and been authenticated—which are greater in number than any of the other Greek fragments—are found in Joseph Reuss's *Johannes-Kommentare aus der Griechischen Kirche* along with the other Greek fragments listed earlier.[137] Reuss tells us that certain frag-

[132]See the discussion in the introduction of FC 78:23-31.

[133]FC 78:5.

[134]R. Deferrari, "St. Augustine's Method of Composing and Delivering Sermons," *American Journal of Philology* 43 (1922):97-123, 193-219, and "Verbatim Reports of Augustine's Unwritten Sermons," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 46 (1915):35-45. Cited in FC 78:9 n. 27.

[135]See also Bertrand de Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis,* vol. 3, *Saint Augustine,* trans. Pierre de Fontnouvelle (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's, 1991), 89-151.

[136]This Ammonius should not be confused with the fifth-century commentator on Aristotle or Ammonius Saccas of Alexandria (second/third century).

[137]The discussion that follows is taken from Reuss's introduction in *JKGK* xxvi-xxx. For further detail, see also J. Reuss, "Der Presbyter Ammonius von Alexandrien und sein Kommentar zum Johannes-Evangelium," *Biblica* 44 (1963):159-70.

ments provide clues as to his identity. His comments on John 3:6 in fragments 75 and 76 utilize terminology of the Council of Chalcedon on the two natures in the one person of Christ,[138] and comments on John 4:3 in fragment 111 refer to the condemnation of Eutyches at the second Synod of Ephesus in 449.[139] There is also a strong dogmatic emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity, and his dogmatic interest continues in his opposition to heretics such as Paul of Samosata, Marcion, the Sabellians, the Arians, Messalians and Manichaeans. There are numerous christological statements throughout the fragments that reflect his opposition to Monophysitism, which may identify him with the Ammonius referred to by Anastasius the Sinaite (d. eighth century), who reports on his literary work. It is also evident that Ammonius knew the commentaries of Theodore of Heraclea, Apollinaris, Didymus, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Cyril of Alexandria. From this and other information gleaned from the fragments, we can conclude that he most likely was born in the second half of the fifth century and lived well into the first half of the sixth century. As an interpreter of Scripture, he follows an Antiochene emphasis on discussing historical details and terms and other material that deals with the literal sense of the text and attempts harmonizing the Synoptics with John. He does not, however, leave out entirely the allegorical tendencies of Alexandria either.[140] His familiarity with previous commentators means many of his comments are already found there, but we have tried to include a representative sampling of his comments.

Homiletical and Other Material Selected

The five major commentaries and serial homilies of Origen, Chrysostom, Theodore, Cyril and Augustine form the skeleton of this ACCS volume. They are supplemented by individual homilies, the fragmentary commentaries found in the *catenae,* key doctrinal works and liturgical texts. It should also be noted that Aquinas's *Catena Aurea,* which is heavily dominated by Augustine and Chrysostom, proved helpful at points in sifting through some of the major commentary material for inclusion. Aquinas had a way of condensing patristic argument and focusing on the meat of commentary, a practice we have tried to emulate where possible.[141] Further sermonic material from Augustine as well as Bede supplements these commentary and homiletic materials. In the case of Bede, his comments in his homilies were often more original than his commentary, which more or less repeats Augustine or other patristic comment almost verbatim and so finds minimal representation here. We have also included homiletic material from Gregory the Great, Leo the Great, Peter Chrysologus, Fulgentius, Chromatius, Caesarius, Gaudentius, Amphilochius, Severus of Antioch, Severian of Gabala, Andrew of Crete, Basil the Great, Basil of Seleucia and others.[142] The Gospel of John in the liturgy and hymnody of the ancient church is exemplified in selections from the hymns of Ephrem the Syrian, Ambrose and others. A number of selections have been included from Romanus Melodus, whose poetic sermons sung during the service chronicled the life of Christ and found

[138]See comment on Jn 3:6.
[139]*JKGK* 225.
[140]See fragments 66, 191, 399, 400, 408.
[141]I also consulted Edwards, *John,* and *Orthodox Study Bible—New Testament and Psalms* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001). Harold Smith's *Ante-Nicene Exegesis of the Gospels,* 6 vols. (London: SPCK, 1925), was a resource for identifying a number of texts from the second and third centuries.
[142]I am indebted to Hermann Josef Sieben's *Kirchenväterhomilien zum Neuen Testament* for help in locating many of these texts found in *Instrumenta Patristica* 22 (Steenbrugis: Abbatia S. Petri, 1991), 87-129. See also his *Exegesis Patrum: Saggio bibliografico sull-esegesi biblica dei Padri della Chiesa,* in Sussidi Patristici 2 (Rome: Istituto Patristico Augustinianum, 1983), 78-90.

their way into the later liturgical life of the church. The frequent quoting of John in the trinitarian, christological and pneumatological controversies necessitated inclusion of these sources found in Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Hilary and Ambrose, among others. The corpus is too vast to be able to include little more than a sampling of some of the key texts, however. The overall goal was to present the broad range of consensual exegesis in the ancient church using primarily the commentary and homiletic tradition without, however, ignoring the palette of genres that make up the early church's commentary on this most spiritual Gospel of John.

Acknowledgments
It has been both an honor and a privilege to work with Thomas Oden on this project, and I thank him in particular for the opportunity of editing this commentary on John. His guidance, along with that of Christopher Hall, has proved invaluable every step of the way. I also want to offer a special acknowledgment of the work of Fr. George Dragas, who provided our office with his own considerable research that is reflected at numerous points in the pages of this introduction. Without the use of his expertise, this introduction would have been greatly diminished. Special thanks are also offered to our generous benefactors Howard and Roberta Ahmanson who have been so supportive of this project. Every one of the people listed on the team page of this volume was also instrumental in seeing this commentary come to fruition, and I could not have done it without them. This commentary is truly a team effort, and part of that team is also the editorial team and staff at InterVarsity Press led by James Hoover. There are also a number of new translations in this volume for which I am grateful to Marco Conti and James Kellerman. The other translations are largely my own. Our research project would be nothing here without the help of the Drew Library headed by Andrew Scrimgeour and his most capable staff of librarians, who have provided us with their resources and expertise that have enabled us to conduct our research. Thanks are also due to the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies under the auspices of Dean James Pain, who provide us with the support and resources we need. And finally, I would like to thank my parents and my family, especially my wife, Joy, and my sons, Christian and Luke, for putting up with all the extra time this commentary project has taken away from them.

Joel C. Elowsky
Feast of the Nativity 2005

The Gospel According to John

THE WORD IN THE BEGINNING JOHN 1:1

Overview: With the wisdom of an enlightened fisherman (Chrysostom), John brings us the firstfruits of the gospel (Origen). He begins his gospel with the eternal generation of the Son (Chrysostom, Augustine), leaving his human birth from Mary to be understood in the context of this first birth (Hilary). He speaks of the Son as the Word "in the beginning," which, by its very definition, means there can be nothing prior (Cyril of Alexandria). Scripture uses "beginning" in a number of different senses, but here the apostle speaks of the eternal beginning, linking the Word's generation with the creative wisdom present at the beginning, which, according to Proverbs 8:22, brought about the creation of the world (Origen). He is the light before the world came into being, the intellectual and essential Wisdom existing before the ages (Eusebius), the living Word that was in the beginning with the Father and who was himself God and the voice of God (Cosmas).

Thus, John cannot be dealing strictly with time (Cyril of Alexandria) or ordered sequence, except in the sense of indicating by "beginning" what is before everything else, as Moses wrote at the beginning of his account of creation. In this sense, he contrasts Moses' account of the beginning of created things with his own account of the beginning when their Creator was already in existence as the author of existence (Theodore). John points to the Father as the *archē*, that is, the source of the Son (Cyril of Alexandria), who himself as the Son and agent of creation is the source and cause, or "beginning," of all that exists (Augustine).

John's paradoxical combination of "was" with "in the beginning" leaves us contemplating nothing short of eternity and infinity (Chrysostom, Hilary). In the case of human beings, the word *was* signifies the past; with God it declares eternity (Chrysostom). The Word of God always was in the beginning and always was (Ambrose) even as he always is (Hilary). The same verb is predicated of the Word when he "*was* in the beginning" and when he "*was* with God" (Origen).

The word *Logos,* which John chooses to use, can signify both "reason" and "word," but here the better translation is "word" because of the power it connotes. A word already exists in our minds even before it is spoken or conceived. But we should not think that the Word of which John speaks is like our human word. In a sense, it is incomprehensible because it is speaking of that which is before form, shape or conception of the mind (Augustine). And yet, just as our words declare what is on our minds (Basil), so also the Word declares to us the mind of God (Tertul-

lian) and those things that were hidden (Ephrem). We forget the power that words have, let alone that *the* Word has (Augustine). The eternal, creative, divine Word of the Father accomplishes whatever it says, while human words disappear as soon as they are spoken (Athanasius), which is why this Word is set apart from human words that did not even exist in the beginning (Basil).

The Son has always been with the Father (Gregory of Nazianzus), but is also shown here to be distinct from the Father even as he is of one substance with the Father (Cyril of Alexandria). We should, however, realize that the name "Father" is not yet used here in the prologue, nor is that of the "Son," because John is concerned that someone might unwittingly try to humanize the Godhead (Gregory of Nyssa). John also guards against anyone who may think that the Word was unbegotten, telling us that the Word was not "in God" but "with God" and thus declaring his eternity as a person with the Father (Chrysostom). And so, the Father and Son remain at the same time distinct (Cyril of Alexandria) but also one (Ambrose). In this sense, then, the Son can be understood as present in the beginning as Wisdom at the side of the Father (Methodius).

The Word itself is more than just the utterance of sound or the hidden thought of God; it is a substance, a Being, it is God. Others have been called God; however, this verse reveals that the Son is God and not merely called God (Hilary). The third repetition of "was" in the final clause of John 1:1 confirms by number that what he "was" (i.e., God), he laid aside (Gregory of Nazianzus). Those who would point to the lack of article as making the Word "a God," that is, a subordinate deity and not fully God, would also have to make the same observation concerning the Father, since there are instances in Scripture where the article is also lacking in designating the Father—and besides, adding the article here would be superfluous since the article already had been affixed previously to the Word (Chrysostom). John anticipated those who would deny the deity of the Son, and so he ensured the establishment of the Son's divinity by confessing him as God (Cyril of Alexandria). This Word was in the beginning and was the one who told Moses, "He who is has sent me" (Ambrose).

The Wisdom of a Fisherman. Chrysostom: As might be expected of one who speaks from the very treasures of the Spirit, John the Divine has arrived bringing to us sublime doctrines and the best way of life and wisdom, as though he had just arrived from the very heavens. In fact, it is likely that not even everyone there in heaven should know them. Do these things belong to a fisherman? Tell me. Do they at all belong to a rhetorician? To a sophist or philosopher? To anyone trained in the wisdom of the Gentiles? By no means. The human soul is simply unable to engage in philosophical speculation on that pure and blessed nature; on the powers that come next to it; on immortality and endless life; on the nature of mortal bodies that shall hereafter be immortal; on punishment and the judgment to come; on the inquiries that shall concern deeds and words, thoughts and imaginations. Homilies on the Gospel of John 2.2.[1]

The Firstfruits of the Gospels. Origen: I think that John's Gospel, which you have enjoined us to examine to the best of our ability, is the firstfruits of the Gospels. It speaks of him whose descent is traced and begins from him who is without a genealogy. . . . The greater and more perfect expressions concerning Jesus are reserved for the one who leaned on Jesus' breast. For none of the other Gospels manifested his divinity as fully as John when he presented him saying, "I am the light of the world,"[2] "I am the way and the truth and the life,"[3] "I am the resurrection,"[4] "I am the door,"[5] "I am the good shepherd."[6] . . . We might dare say then that the Gospels are the firstfruits of all Scripture but that the firstfruits of

[1]NPNF 1 14:4. [2]Jn 8:42. [3]Jn 14:6. [4]Jn 11:25. [5]Jn 10:9. [6]Jn 10:11.

the Gospels is that according to John whose meaning no one can understand who has not leaned on Jesus' breast or received Mary from Jesus to be his mother also. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.21-23.[7]

1:1a *In the Beginning*

The Eternal Generation of the Son. Chrysostom: While all the other Evangelists begin with the incarnation . . . John, passing by everything else—his conception, his birth, his education, and his growth—speaks immediately of his eternal generation. Homilies on the Gospel of John 4.1.[8]

The First Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Augustine: There are two births of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one divine, the other human. . . . Consider that first begetting: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Whose Word? The Father's own. Which Word? The Son himself. The Father has never been without the Son; and yet the one who has never been without the Son begot the Son. He both begot and yet did not begin to do so. There is no beginning for one begotten without beginning. And yet he is the Son, and yet he is begotten. A mere human is going to say, "How is it that he is begotten, and yet he does not have a beginning? If he does not have a beginning, how was he begotten?" How, I do not know. Are you asking a mere human how God was begotten? I am overwhelmed by your questioning, but I appeal to the prophet: "His begetting who can tell the tale of?"[9] Sermon 196.1.[10]

Christ's Birth from Mary. Hilary of Poitiers: I will not endure to hear that Christ was born of Mary unless I also hear, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." On the Councils 27.70.[11]

Nothing Is Prior to the Beginning. Cyril of Alexandria: There is nothing older than "the beginning" if we stay with the definition of beginning (for there cannot be a beginning of a beginning), or else it would diverge from being in truth a beginning if there is something else one can imagine before it or that arises before it. Otherwise, if anything can precede what is truly "beginning," our language respecting it will go on into infinity with beginnings continually cropping up and making the one we are looking at a "second." . . . And since its ever-backward flight has no termination, reaching up to the limit of the ages, the Son will be found to have been not made in time but rather invisibly existing with the Father. For "in the beginning *was*" the Son. But if he "was in the beginning," what mind, tell me, can leap over the force of that word *was*? When will the "was" stay within a boundary, seeing that it always runs before . . . whatever conception follows it? Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.1.[12]

Different Ways to Understand "Beginning" in Scripture. Origen: One will discover many different meanings of the expression ["beginning"] even in the Word of God. One meaning involves change that has to do with a way or a length, as revealed in Scripture, "The beginning of the right path is to do justice."[13] . . . There is also a "beginning" of creation . . . in the statement "In the beginning God made heaven and earth."[14] But I think what is meant is more clearly stated in Job, "This is the beginning of the Lord's creation."[15] . . . We can also understand what is meant by the beginning of creation in Proverbs: "For God," [Wisdom] says, "created me the beginning of his ways for his works."[16] . . .

But someone will say with good reason that the God of all things is clearly a beginning too, proposing that the Father is the beginning of the

[7]FC 80:37-38. [8]NPNF 1 14:16**; SC 120:68-70. [9]Is 53:8. [10]*WSA* 3 6:60. [11]NPNF 2 9:22. [12]LF 43:11-12**. [13]Prov 16:7 LXX. [14]Gen 1:1. [15]Job 40:19. [16]Prov 8:22.

Son, and the Creator is the beginning of the things created and, in general, God is the beginning of the things that exist. . . . And third, that from which something comes, as the underlying matter is thought to be a "beginning" by those who understand matter to be uncreated. . . . In addition to these definitions, that "according to which" something is made, as according to its form, is also a "beginning." . . . Christ, for instance, is the beginning of those made according to the image of God. . . .

There is also a beginning that pertains to doctrine . . . where the apostle says, "Although, because of the time, you should be teachers, you need for someone to teach you again the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God."[17] Now there are two kinds of beginning pertaining to doctrine. One involves its nature, and the other its relation to us. . . . We say that in nature Christ is the beginning of doctrine insofar as he is "the wisdom" and "power of God."[18] But in his relation to us the beginning of doctrine is "the Word became flesh," that he might dwell among us who are able to receive him only in this way at first. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.90-91, 95, 101-4, 106-7.[19]

Christ As Wisdom at the Beginning. Origen: Although so many meanings of "beginning" have occurred to us at the present time, we are investigating how we ought to take the statement "In the beginning was the Word." It is clear that we are not to understand it in its meaning related to change or a way and length. And we should certainly not take it in its meaning related to creation.

But it is possible that he is the "by which," which is effective, since "God commanded and they were created."[20] For Christ is perhaps the creator to whom the Father says, "Let there be light" and "Let there be a firmament."[21]

But it is as the beginning that Christ is Creator, according to which he is wisdom. Therefore as wisdom he is called the beginning. For wisdom says in Solomon, "God created me in the beginning of his ways for his works,"[22] that "the Word might be in the beginning," in wisdom. It is wisdom that is understood, on the one hand, taken in relation to the structure of contemplation and the thoughts of all things, but it is the Word that is received, taken in relation to the communication of the things that have been contemplated to spiritual beings. . . .

Since, then, our purpose is to perceive clearly the statement, "In the beginning was the Word," and wisdom, with the aid of testimonies from the Proverbs, has been explained to be called "beginning,"[23] and wisdom has been conceived as preceding the Word that announces it, we must understand that the Word is always in the beginning, that is, in wisdom. Being in wisdom, however, which is called "beginning," does not prevent the Word from being "with God," and himself being God and not merely being "with God," but since he is "in the beginning," that is in wisdom, that Word is "with God." Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.109-11, 289.[24]

Preexistence and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Eusebius of Caesarea: Who beside the Father could clearly understand the Light that was before the world, the intellectual and essential Wisdom that existed before the ages, the living Word that was in the beginning with the Father and that was God, the first and only begotten of God that was before every creature and creation visible and invisible, the commander-in-chief of the rational and immortal host of heaven, the messenger of the great counsel, the executor of the Father's unspoken will, the creator, with the Father, of all things, the second cause of the universe after the Father, the true and only begotten Son of God, the Lord and God and King of all created things, the one who

[17]Heb 5:12. [18]1 Cor 1:24. [19]FC 80:52-56**; SC 120:106-16. [20]Ps 148:5. [21]Gen 1:3, 6. [22]Prov 8:22. [23]Prov 8:22. [24]FC 80:56-57, 93-94**; SC 120:118-20, 204-6. See also Athanasius, who has an extended discussion of the Word as Wisdom in his *Discourse Against the Arians* 2.18-81 (NPNF 2 4:357-92), refuting the Arian charge that the Son is a creature according to Prov 8:22.

has received dominion and power, with divinity itself, and with might and honor from the Father. ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY 1.2.2-3.[25]

THE VOICE OF THE NATURE ASSUMED. COSMAS OF MAIUMA:

The Father begot me, creative Wisdom, before the ages;
He established me as the beginning of his ways
For the works now mystically accomplished[26]
For though I am the uncreated Word by nature,
I make my own the voice
Of the nature I have now assumed.

As I am a man
In reality, not a mirage,
So divinized is the nature which,
By the manner of the exchange,
Is united to me.
Wherefore know that I am one Christ
Who saves that of which and in which I am.

KANON FOR THE FIFTH DAY OF GREAT WEEK, NINTH ODE.[27]

"BEGINNING" CANNOT BE REFERENCING TIME. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: It is not possible to take "beginning" *(archē)* of the Only Begotten as being understood in any way dealing with time, seeing that the Son is before all time and has his being before the ages, and, what is even more, that the divine nature shuns such a boundary. . . . For no beginning will ever be conceived of by itself that does not look to its own end, since beginning is called this in reference to an end, and end again in reference to a beginning. But the beginning we are pointing to in this instance is that relating to time and dimension. And so, since the Son is older than the ages themselves, he will be free of any generation in time, and he always was in the Father as in a source. The Father then being considered as the Source, the Logos was in him being his wisdom, power, express image, radiance and likeness. If there was no time when the Father was without Logos, wisdom, image, radiance and likeness, it is necessary to confess also that the Son, who is all these to the eternal Father, is eternal. COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 1.1.[28]

MOSES ACCOUNTS FOR CREATED THINGS. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: In a word, they[29] have shown in their use of terms and exposition of their doctrines that they call "beginning" that which is before everything. Indeed, you will not find that the divine Scriptures say anything different. Even among common people the name "beginning" is used in a similar sense. Let me now give a suitable example: the blessed Moses, intending to instruct the Jewish nation both about God and created things—how God alone was the one who existed, while they were made—and wishing to explain to us the order of the creation of those things, said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."[30] He did not say "they were in the beginning," because he believed that expression was not suitable for things that did not exist by themselves and were created. This is because he knew that the Creator, God, existed before them. Nor was he content only to say "in the beginning." Rather, he said, "In the beginning *God created*," thinking that it would be better to mention their creator first and then add what had been created in the beginning. He first mentioned God their creator in order to raise the mind of his audience toward him, and then he related the things that were made. COMMENTARY ON JOHN 1.1.1.[31]

JOHN ACCOUNTS FOR THEIR CREATOR'S PREEXISTENCE. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: Since he thought it necessary to speak about the divinity of the Only Begotten and to teach both who he is and the nature of his existence, the blessed John emulates this use of language, saying, "In

[25]NPNF 2 1:82. [26]Prov 8:22. [27]MFC 7:391-92. [28]LF 43:12-13**. [29]Theodore is speaking of those whose specialty is language. [30]Gen 1:1. [31]CSCO 4 3:15-16.

the beginning *was the Word*." You see, since Moses described the beginning of the things that were made—showing clearly in the account of creation that their maker preexisted—John judged it to be superfluous for himself also to recount the beginning of what was made and declares that the Son was the beginning of the things that exist; that is, he was in the beginning because he always was. So then, when making inquiry into issues of existence, one concerned with creation should not say that created things existed in the beginning, for they did not exist before they were made, because if they existed, they were not made. Rather, going beyond these—on the ground that at some time they did not exist—since we find something transcending them, we should say that it was *this* that was in the beginning.

Therefore, if indeed the Word did not exist—as the crazed Arians say—but received his existence at a later time, then he was not the one who was in the beginning, and [the title would belong to] the one who was when he was not. I shall not pass over the first and refer to the second as "the beginning."[32] This is, then, the meaning of the Word found in the Gospel of John, since he is the first *terminus* of the things that exist. If he is the first *terminus*, however, it was never when he was not, because he always was.[33] Therefore, nothing will ever preexist him—inasmuch as the Father may be regarded as preceding any cause, for he himself exists in himself, so also the Son exists. For this reason he certainly did not mean for the phrase "he was in the beginning" to be taken in the same sense as the phrase "in the beginning God created." Indeed, there[34] the addition of the word *created* defined the beginning in regard to the created things, so as to signify only their beginning, whereas here he said simply and absolutely, "He was in the beginning." And so it is apparent that the Word discussed here is the Word that is the first and principal beginning, to which nothing of what exists can be regarded as prior. And he added the word *was* to the phrase "in the beginning" to show that he was indicating without any qualification the "beginning" of the things that exist, which indeed is the "first being" and the "ever-being" and the "never not being." Commentary on the Gospel of John, Fragment 2.1, 1-2.[35]

The Son Is in the Beginning. Cyril of Alexandria: The blessed Evangelist, then, seems here to name the Father *Archē*,[36] that is, the power over all, that the divine nature that is over all may be shown, having under its feet everything that is originate and borne above those things that are called by it into being. In this *Archē*, then, that is above all and over all, *was the Word*. The Word was not with all things under its feet, but [it was] apart from all things. It was *in* the *Archē* by nature as its co-eternal fruit, having the nature of him who begot him (as it were) the most ancient place of all. So then, he who is begotten free of a Father, who is also himself free, will with him possess the sovereignty over all. . . . The blessed Evangelist shows that the Son is of the essence that is free and sovereign over all and declares that he is in the Father by nature saying, "In the beginning was the Word." Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.1.[37]

Genesis Agrees with John. Augustine: Moses, they tell us, says, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth," and does not even mention the Son through whom all things were made; whereas John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God, all things were made through him, and

[32]Here the Greek text can be confusing; the interpretive gloss of the Syriac version clarifies this point: "We call beginning of any things that which is first in them, but we do not call what is second the beginning. For if it is after another, it is not first; and if it is not first, a fortiori, it is not the beginning." [33]This is a play on the Arian, "There was when he was not." [34]Gen 1:1. [35]ECS 7:44-45. [36]The Greek text of John's Gospel begins *En archē ēn ho logos*. . . . The Greek word *archē* is usually translated "beginning," but it can also be understood to signify "sovereignty" or "authority" (cf. Lk 20:20; Eph 1:21; Col 2:10; 1 Cor 15:24). It is this latter meaning of the word *archē* that Cyril is using. Thus the beginning of John's Gospel is understood by Cyril as saying, "In the *Father* was the Word." [37]LF 43:14-15*.

without him was made nothing." Is this contradictory, or are they not rather contradicting themselves when they prefer blindly to find fault with what they do not understand instead of earnestly seeking to understand? . . . For the Lord says to the unbelieving Jews, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me too; for he wrote about me."[38] So why shouldn't I understand the Lord himself as the beginning in which God the Father made heaven and earth? For Moses certainly wrote, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth," and it is the Lord's words that confirm that he wrote about the Lord. Or perhaps he himself is not also the beginning? But there need be no doubt about that either, with the Gospel telling us, when the Jews asked the Lord who he was, that he replied, "The beginning, because I am also speaking to you."[39] There you have the beginning in which God made heaven and earth. So God made heaven and earth in the Son, through whom all things were made and without whom was made nothing. And so, since the Gospel is in agreement with Genesis, we may retain our inheritance in line with the consensus of both Testaments and leave fault-finding quibbles to the disinherited heretics. Sermon 1.2.[40]

1:1b *Was*

The Infinite *Beginning* When Coupled with *Was*. Chrysostom: As when our ship is near shore and cities and ports pass in view before us that on the open sea vanish and leave nothing to fix the eye on, so the Evangelist here takes us with him in his flight above the created world leaving the eye to gaze upon emptiness and an unlimited expanse. . . .

For the intellect, having ascended to "the beginning," enquires, "What *beginning*?" Finding then that the "was" in the text exceeds its imagination, [the intellect] has no point on which to focus its thought. Looking intently onward but being unable to fix its gaze, it becomes wearied and turns back to things below. Indeed, this expression, "was in the beginning," is expressive of eternal and infinite being. Homilies on the Gospel of John 2.9.[41]

John Takes Us Beyond "Beginning." Hilary of Poitiers: Consider and decide whether it were the greater feat to raise the dead or impart to an untrained mind the knowledge of mysteries so deep as he reveals by saying, "In the beginning was the Word." What does this "in the beginning was" mean? He ranges backward over the spaces of time, centuries are left behind, and ages are cancelled. Fix in your mind what date you will for this "beginning"; you miss the mark, for even then he of whom we are speaking "was." Survey the universe; note well what is written of it: "In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth."[42] This word *beginning* fixes the moment of creation; you can assign its date to an event that is definitely stated to have happened "in the beginning." But this fisherman of mine, unlettered and unread, is untrammeled by time, undaunted by its immensity; he pierces beyond the beginning. For his "was" has no limit of time and no commencement; the uncreated Word "was in the beginning." On the Trinity 2.13.[43]

"Was" and "Made" Must Be Distinguished. Chrysostom: [Heretics] say that the words "in the beginning was the Word" do not denote eternity absolutely, for this same expression was also used concerning heaven and earth. . . .

However, let us see the proofs that they give to us. "In the beginning," it is said, "God made the heavens and the earth, and the earth was invisible and unformed."[44] And, "There 'was' a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim."[45] These are what they think are strong arguments, and they are strong—in proving the correctness of the doc-

[38]Jn 5:46. [39]Jn 8:25. [40]*WSA* 3 1:169-70. In another of his sermons (*Sermon* 117), Augustine answers the Arian charge that a father, by definition, must be before a son. See *WSA* 3 4:213-17. [41]NPNF 1 14:7-8**. See also Chrysostom's *Homily* 3.2, where he goes into further detail on the meaning of "was" as an expression of the eternal creative word. [42]Gen 1:1. [43]NPNF 2 9:56*. See also Cyril of Alexandria, *loc. cit.* [44]Gen 1:2. [45]1 Sam 1:1.

trines asserted by us. Meanwhile, they are utterly powerless to establish their blasphemy. For tell me, what has the word *was* in common with the word *made?* What does God have in common with human beings? Why do you mix what may not be mixed? Why confound things that are distinct, why bring low what is above? In this text it is not only the expression "was" that denotes eternity, but also the expressions "was in the beginning" and "the Word was." For even as the word *being* distinguishes present time when used in regard to human beings but denotes eternity when used in regard to God, so "was" signifies to us past time—limited at that—when used in regard to our nature but declares eternity when used in regard to God. Homilies on the Gospel of John 3.2.[46]

The Word of God Always Was. Ambrose: "In the beginning," we are told, "God created heaven and earth."[47] And the world was therefore created and that which was not began to exist. And the word of God was in the beginning and always was. Six Days of Creation 1.5.19.[48]

Christ Was and Is, Just as the Father Always Is. Hilary of Poitiers: He "was," and he "is," since he is from him who always is what he is. . . . Now since it is the special characteristic of his being that his Father always exists and that he is always his Son, and since eternity is expressed in the name "he that is," therefore, since he possesses absolute being, he possesses also eternal being. . . . There can be no doubt that no one who already was in existence could be born. For no cause of birth can accrue to him who of himself continues eternal. But God Only Begotten . . . bears witness to the Father as the source of his being. On the Trinity 12.25.[49]

The Word Does Not Come to Be. Origen: The same verb, "was," is predicated of the Word when he "was in the beginning" and when he "was with God." He is neither separated from the beginning, nor does he depart from the Father. And again, he does not "come to be" "in the beginning" from not being "in the beginning," nor does he pass from not being "with God" to coming to be "with God," for before all time and eternity "the Word was in the beginning," and "the Word was with God." . . . Perhaps John, seeing some such order in the argument, did not place "the Word was God" before "the Word was with God," so that we might not be hindered in seeing the individual meaning of each proposition in the affirmation of the series. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.9, 11.[50]

1:1c *The Word*

"Logos" Can Mean Both "Reason" and "Word." Augustine: The Greek word *logos* signifies in Latin both "reason"[51] and "word."[52] However, in this verse the better translation is "word," so that not only the relation to the Father is indicated but also the efficacious power with respect to those things that are made by the Word. Reason, however, is correctly called reason even if nothing is made by it. On Eighty-three Varied Questions 63.[53]

Word Occurs Before Sound or Thought. Augustine: Whoever, then, is able to understand a word, not only before it is uttered in sound but also before the images of its sounds are considered in thought . . . may see enigmatically, and as it were in a glass, some similarity with that Word of which it is said, "In the beginning was the Word." . . . For when we give expression to something that we know, the word used is necessarily derived from the knowledge thus retained in the memory and must be of the same quality with that knowledge. For a word is a thought formed from a thing that we know. This word is spoken in the heart, being neither Greek nor Latin nor any other language, although, when we want to communicate it to others, some sign is

[46]NPNF 1 14:11**. [47]Gen 1:1. [48]FC 42:17*. [49]NPNF 2 9:224*. [50]FC 80:97; SC 120:212-14. [51]Lat *Ratio*. [52]Lat *Verbum*. [53]FC 70:127.

assumed by which to express it. . . .

Accordingly, the word that sounds externally is a sign of the word that lies hidden within, having the greater claim to be called a "word." For what is uttered by the mouth of our flesh is the voice of the word and is in fact called "word" with reference to that from which it is taken as it then makes externally apparent. On the Trinity 15.10.19-11.20.[54]

The Human Word Is a Helpful, If Imperfect, Analogy. Augustine: Just as our knowledge is not like God's knowledge, so also is our word, born from our knowledge, unlike that Word of God which is born from the essence of the Father—we might even say, born from the Father's knowledge, from the Father's wisdom, or still more exactly, from the Father who is knowledge, from the Father who is wisdom. . . .

The Word of God, then, the only begotten Son of the Father—in all things like and equal to the Father, God of God, Light of Light, Wisdom of Wisdom, Essence of Essence—is altogether what the Father is. And yet, he is not the Father because the one is Son, the other is Father. Therefore he knows all that the Father knows; but his knowledge is from the Father. For knowing and being are one in him. And therefore, as the Father's being is not from the Son, so neither is his knowing. Accordingly, the Father begat the Word equal to himself in all things as though uttering forth himself. For he would not have uttered himself wholly and perfectly if there were in his Word anything more or less than in himself. . . .

Our own inner word . . . which is at least in some way like that [divine] Word,[55] should nonetheless cause us to stop and consider how dissimilar it is as well. . . .What is this [word that we have] that is formable, but not yet formed,[56] except a something in our mind which we toss to and fro, turning it over in our mind, thinking first one thing and then another as each occurs to us? A true word comes into being when, as I said, what we have been tossing to and fro by turning it over in our minds arrives at what we know, and then takes on that entire likeness. At this point the conception corresponds exactly to the thing, In other words, it is *said* in the heart, but without articulate sound or even the thought of articulate sound that might otherwise belong to a particular language. And so, if we even admit (in order not to dispute laboriously about a name) that this something of our mind which can be formed from our knowledge is already to be called a word—even before it is so formed because it is, so to say, already formable—who would not see how great the dissimilarity would be between this word and that Word of God which is so in the form of God as not to have been formable before it was formed, or to have been capable at any time of being formless, but is a simple form, and simply equal to him from whom it is, and with whom it is wonderfully co-eternal?

Wherefore that Word of God is . . . not to be called a thought of God. Otherwise we might believe that there is something revolving in God so that it at one time receives and at another recovers a form, so as to be a word, and again can lose that form and revolve, in some sense, formlessly. On the Trinity 15.13.22-16.25.[57]

The Incomprehensibility of an Unchangeable Form. Augustine: We are not now discussing, brothers and sisters, possible ways of understanding the text, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It can only be understood in ways beyond words; human words cannot suffice for understanding the Word of God. What we are discussing and stating is why it is not understood. I am not speaking in order that it may be

[54]NPNF 1 3:209**. [55]See also Theodore on this point, *loc. cit.* [56]Augustine is here employing the neoplatonic understanding of the realm of ideas in the mind of God, which he called "forms." These forms were the unchangeable essence of things. They are themselves not formed, and they are eternal and always in the same state because they are contained in God's intelligence. They neither come into being, nor do they pass away, but everything that can or does come into being and pass away is formed in accordance with them. [57]NPNF 1 3:213-14**; see also *Sermon* 214.5 (*WSA* 3 6:153).

understood but telling you what prevents it being understood.

You see, it is a kind of form, a form that has not been formed but is the form of all things that have been formed; an unchangeable form that has neither fault not failing, beyond space, standing apart as at once the foundation for all things to stand on and the ceiling of them to stand under. If you say that all things are in it, you are not lying. The Word itself, you see, is called the Wisdom of God; but we have it written, "In wisdom you have made them all."[58] Therefore all things are in it. And yet because it is God, all things are under it. Sermon 117.3.[59]

The Similarity of Our Word to the Word. Basil the Great: Our outward word has some similarity to the divine Word. For our word declares the whole conception of the mind; since what we conceive in the mind we bring out in word. Indeed our heart is as it were the source and the uttered word the stream that flows from there. Homily 16.3, In the Beginning Was the Word.[60]

The Word Reveals What Is Hidden. Ephrem the Syrian: The things that were hidden were revealed through him [our Lord], just as the secrets of the heart are made known by a word. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 1.2.[61]

The Word As the Thought of God. Tertullian: Certain people affirm that in Hebrew Genesis begins, "In the beginning God made for himself a son."[62] Against the ratification of this I am persuaded by other arguments from God's ordinance in which he was before the foundation of the world until the generation of the Son. For before all things, God was alone, himself his own world and location and everything—alone however because there was nothing external beside him. Yet not even then was he alone; for he had with him that Reason that he had in himself—his own, of course. For God is rational, and reason is primarily in him, and thus from him are all things: and that Reason is his consciousness. This the Greeks call *Logos*, by which expression we also designate discourse, and consequently our people are already wont, through the artlessness of the translation, to say that "Discourse was in the beginning with God," though it would be more appropriate to consider Reason of older standing, seeing that God is [not] discursive from the beginning but is rational even before the beginning, and because discourse itself, having its ground in reason, shows reason to be prior as being its substance. . . . And that you may understand this the more easily, observe first from yourself, as from the image and likeness of God,[63] how you also have reason within yourself, who are a rational animal not only as having been made by a rational Creator but also as out of his substance having made a living soul.[64] See how, when you by reason argue silently with yourself, this same action takes place within you, while reason accompanied by discourse meets you at every movement of your thought, at every impression of your consciousness. . . . So in a sort of way you have in you as a second [person] discourse by means of which you speak by thinking and by means of which you think by speaking: discourse itself is another [than you]. How much more completely therefore does this action take place in God, whose image and similitude you are authoritatively declared to be, that even while silent he has in himself reason and in [that] reason discourse. So I have been able without rashness to conclude that even then, before the establishment of the universe, God was not alone, seeing he continually had in himself Reason, and in Reason Discourse, which he made another beside himself by activity within himself. Against Praxeas 5.[65]

The Commonness of Words Hides Their

[58]Ps 104:24 (103:24 LXX, Vg). [59]*WSA* 3 4:210. [60]PG 31:477. [61]CB709.2. [62]See Gen 1:1. [63]Gen 1:26. [64]Gen 2:7. [65]*TTAP* 134-36.

Power. Augustine: Words, by their everyday usage, sound and proceeding out of us, have become common, almost despicable things to us, seeming to be nothing more than words. However, there is a word that remains inward, in the very person himself; distinct from the sound that proceeds out of the mouth. There is a word that is truly and spiritually that which you understand by the sound, not being the actual sound itself. Notice, for instance, when I say "God," how short the word is I have spoken—four letters and two syllables [in Latin].[66] Is this all that God is, four letters and two syllables? Or is that which is signified as costly as the word is paltry? . . . What then is in your heart when you think of a certain substance, living, eternal, all-powerful, infinite, everywhere present, everywhere whole, nowhere shut in? When you think of these qualities, this is the word concerning *God* in your heart. But is this the sound that consists of four letters and two syllables? Therefore, those things that are spoken and pass away are sounds, are letters and are syllables. His word, which sounds, passes away; but what the sound signified—and what is in the speaker as he thought it and in the hearer as he understood it—that is what remains while the sound itself passes away. Tractates on the Gospel of John 1.8.[67]

The Creative Divine Word of the Father. Athanasius: [The Arians] whisper, "How can the Son be Word or the Word be God's image? For a human word is composed of syllables, and only signifies the speaker's will and then is over and done with." . . . But the word of truth confutes them as follows: If they were disputing concerning any human being, then let them exercise reason in this human way, both concerning his Word and his Son. But if their dispute concerns God, who created humanity, let them no longer entertain human thoughts but others that are above human nature. For such as he that begets, such of necessity is the offspring. Whatever the Word's Father is, the Word also must be. Now a man, begotten in time, also himself begets children in time. And since he came to be out of nothing, his word also is over and done with.

But God is not like humans as Scripture has said. God is, exists and has always existed. Therefore also his Word exists and is forever with the Father, as radiance accompanies light. The human word is composed of syllables and neither lives nor operates anything but only signifies the speaker's intention. It goes out and then goes away, no more to appear, since it did not exist at all before it was spoken. The word of human beings neither lives nor operates anything. Nor, in short, is it human. And this happens to it, as I said before, because the human being who begets it has his nature out of nothing. But God's Word is not merely pronounced, as one may say, nor is it a sound of accents, nor should we think of his Son as his command. Rather he is the radiance of light and so is perfect offspring from perfect being. And so he is also God, since he is God's image. For "the Word was God," says Scripture.[68] Since human words have no power or energy on their own, they work not by means of words but with their hands which they do have. But the human word does not subsist on its own. The "Word of God," however, as the apostle says, "is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and it is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened before his eyes."[69] He is then Framer of all, "and without him was not one thing made,"[70] nor can anything be made without him. Nor must we ask why the Word of God is not such as our word, considering God is not such as we are. Discourses Against the Arians 2.18.34-36.[71]

The Only Begotten Word. Basil the Great: This Word is not a human word. For

[66]Lat *Deus*. [67]NPNF 1 7:9-10**. [68]See Ephrem *Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron* 1.3 (*ECTD* 41). [69]Heb 4:12-13. [70]Jn 1:3. [71]NPNF 2 4:367*.

how was there a human word in the beginning, when the man received his being last of all? . . . There was not then any word of humankind in the beginning, nor yet of angels; for every creature is within the limits of time, having its beginning of existence from the Creator. . . . But what does the Gospel say? It calls the Only Begotten himself the Word. Homily 16.3, In the Beginning Was the Word.[72]

1:1d *The Word Was with God*

Eternally Unchangeable. Gregory of Nazianzus: There never was a time when [the Father] was without his Word, or when he was not the Father. On the Son, Theological Oration 3(29).17.[73]

The Son Is Distinct from and Consubstantial with the Father. Cyril of Alexandria: John taught in the foregoing, that the Word was in *archē,* that is, in God the Father, as we said. But, with the eye of his understanding illumined, he was not ignorant that certain people would arise who, out of their great ignorance, would say that the Father and Son are one and the same and distinguish the Holy Trinity in name only. Thus, they wouldn't allow them to exist in their several Persons so that the Father should be conceived of as in truth Father and not Son, the Son again to be by himself Son, not Father, as the word of truth is. Since John knew this would happen and that, perhaps, this heresy was already confronting him and being debated at that time—or was about to be so—John arms himself for its destruction. And so, by the side of "In the beginning was the Word," he put, "And the Word was with God" everywhere adding of necessity the "was" on account of his generation before the ages. And yet, by saying that the Word was with God, he shows both that the Son is One, having his existence by himself, and that God the Father is another, with whom the Word was. For how can that which is one in number be conceived of as itself with itself, or beside itself? . . .

The Son is consubstantial with the Father and the Father with the Son, which is why they arrive at an unchangeable likeness, so that the Father is seen in the Son, the Son in the Father, and each flashes forth in the other, even as the Savior himself says: "He that has seen me has seen the Father,"[74] and again, "I in the Father and the Father in me."[75] Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.2.[76]

No Mention of Father and Son. Gregory of Nyssa: [John] declares, "And the Word was with God." Once more the Evangelist fears for our untrained state, once more he dreads our childish and untaught condition. He does not yet entrust to our ears the appellation of "Father," in case any of the more carnally minded, learning of "the Father," may be led by his understanding to imagine also by consequence a mother. Neither does he yet name in his proclamation the Son, for he still suspects our customary tendency to the lower nature and is concerned that if someone hears of the Son, that person might humanize the Godhead by an idea of passion. For this reason, resuming his proclamation, he again calls him "the Word," making this the account of his nature to you in your unbelief. For as your word proceeds from your mind, without requiring the intervention of passion, so here also, in hearing of the Word, you shall conceive that which is from something and shall not conceive passion. Against Eunomius 4.1.[77]

John Guards Against Anyone Thinking the Word Is Unbegotten. Chrysostom: The first "was" applied to "the Word" is only indicative of his eternal Being—for "In the beginning," he says, "*was* the Word." The second "was"—"and the Word *was* with God"—denotes his relational being.[78] For since to be eternal and

[72]PG 31:477. Chrysostom notes that the article, as in "*the* Word," distinguishes this Word from all other words. [73]NPNF 2 7:307*. [74]Jn 14:9. [75]Jn 14:11. [76]LF 43:16-17**. [77]NPNF 2 5:154*. The critical Greek text references this quote as *Contra Eunomius* 3.2.19-20 (TLG 2017.030). [78]That is, with whom he was.

without beginning is most peculiar to God, this he puts first. Then, in case any one hearing that he was "in the beginning" should assert that he was "unbegotten" also, he immediately remedies this by saying (before he declares what he was) that he was "with God." And he has prevented anyone from supposing that this "Word" is simply one who is either uttered or conceived, by the addition, as I said before, of the article, as well as by this second expression. For he does not say was "in God" but was "with God," declaring to us his eternity as to person. Homilies on the Gospel of John 3.3.[79]

Father and Son Are Distinct Persons. Cyril of Alexandria: [The] sameness of nature will be confessed of both [Father and Son], yet the individual existence of each will surely follow, so that both the Father should be conceived of as indeed Father and the Son as Son. For thus, the Holy Spirit being numbered with them and counted as God, the holy and adorable Trinity will have its proper fullness. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.2.[80]

Being with God Does Not Mean Being Mingled with God. Ambrose: That which was "in the beginning" is not comprehended in time, is not preceded by any beginning. Let Arius, therefore, hold his peace. Moreover, that which was "with God" is not confounded and mingled with him but is distinguished by the perfection unblemished that it has as the Word abiding with God; and so let Sabellius keep silence. And "the Word was God." This Word, therefore, consists not in uttered speech but in the designation of celestial excellence, so that Photinus's teaching is refuted. Furthermore, by the fact that in the beginning he was with God is proven the indivisible unity of eternal Godhead in Father and Son, to the shame and confusion of Eunomius. On the Christian Faith 1.8.57.[81]

Wisdom with God in the Beginning. Methodius: He [Methodius] says, concerning the words "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,"[82] that one will not err who says that the "Beginning" is Wisdom. For Wisdom is said by one of the divine band to speak in this manner concerning herself: "The Lord created me the beginning of his ways for his works: of old he laid my formulation."[83] It was fitting and more seemly that all things that came into existence should be more recent than Wisdom, since they existed through her. Now consider whether the saying "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God"—whether these statements are not in agreement with those. For we must say that the Beginning, out of which the most upright Word came forth, is the Father and Maker of all things, in whom it was. And the words "The same was in the beginning with God" seem to indicate the position of authority of the Word, which he had with the Father before the world came into existence; "beginning" signifying his power. And so, after the peculiar unbeginning beginning, who is the Father, he is the beginning of other things, by whom all things are made. Extracts from the Work on Things Created 8.[84]

1:1e *The Word Was God*

The Word Is More Than the Utterance of a Sound. Hilary of Poitiers: You will plead that a word is the sound of a voice; that it is a naming of things, an utterance of thought. . . . The nature of a word is that it is first a potentiality, afterwards a past event; an existing thing only while it is being heard. How can we say, "In the beginning was the Word," when a word neither exists before, nor lives after, a definite point of time? Can we even say that there is a point of

[79]NPNF 1 14:12**. [80]LF 43:18*. [81]NPNF 2 10:210. See also Ambrose *On the Christian Faith* 5.1.18. [82]Gen 1:1. [83]Prov 8:22. [84]ANF 6:381. See also Ambrose *On the Holy Spirit* 1.11.120 and Basil *Hexaemeron* 3.2.

time in which a word exists? Not only are the words in a speaker's mouth nonexistent until they are spoken and perished the instant they are uttered, but even in the moment of utterance there is a change from the sound that commences to that which ends a word. . . . Even though your unpracticed ear failed to catch the first clause, "In the beginning was the Word," why complain of the next, "And the Word was with God"? Was it "and the Word was *in* God" that you heard? . . . Or is it that your provincial dialect makes no distinction between *in* and *with?* The assertion is that which was in the beginning was *with,* not *in,* another. . . . Hear now the rank and the name of the Word: *And the Word was God*. Your plea that the Word is the sound of a voice, the utterance of a thought, falls to the ground. The Word is a reality, not a sound, a Being, not a speech, God, not a nonentity. On the Trinity 2.15.[85]

Godhead Is an Inherent Character of Christ's Nature. Hilary of Poitiers: [The Son], being God, is nothing else than God. For when I hear the words "And the Word was God," they do not merely tell me that the Son was called God; they reveal to my understanding that he is God. In those previous instances, where Moses was called god and others were styled gods,[86] there was the mere addition of a name by way of title. Here a solid essential truth is stated: "The Word was God." That *was* indicates no accidental title but an eternal reality, a permanent element of his existence, an inherent character of his nature. On the Trinity 7.11.[87]

What He Was, He Laid Aside. Gregory of Nazianzus: [He] is not contained in any place; the timeless, the bodiless, the uncircumscribed, the same who was and is; who was both above time and came under time, and was invisible and is seen. He was in the beginning and was with God and was God. The word *was* occurs the third time to be confirmed by number. What he was, he laid aside; what he was not, he assumed; not that he became two, but he deigned to be one made out of the two. For both are God, that which assumed and that which was assumed; two natures meeting in one, not two sons (let us not give a false account of the blending). On the Words of the Gospel, "When Jesus Had Finished These Sayings," Oration 37.2.[88]

No Article Needed in Affirming Divinity of the Word. Chrysostom: See, he says, how the Father is named with the addition of the article but the Son without it. What do you do then when the apostle says, "The great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ,"[89] and again, "Who is above all, God"?[90] It is true that here he has mentioned the Son, without the article; but [the apostle] does the same with the Father also, at least in his epistle to the Philippians, where he says, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God,"[91] and again to the Romans, "Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."[92] Besides, it was superfluous for it to be attached in that place, when close above it was continually attached to "the Word." For as in speaking concerning the Father, he says, "God is a Spirit,"[93] and we do not, because the article is not joined to "Spirit," yet deny the spiritual nature of God. Likewise here, although the article is not annexed to the Son, the Son is not on that account a lesser God. Why so? Because in saying "God" and again "God," he does not reveal to us any difference in this Godhead, but the contrary. For having before said, "and the Word was God," so that no one might suppose the Godhead of the Son to be inferior, he immediately adds the characteristics of genuine Godhead, including eternity, for "He was," says he, "in the beginning with God," and attributes to him [in the next verse] the office of creator. Homilies on the Gospel of John 4.3.[94]

John Anticipates Those Denying the

[85]NPNF 2 9:56. See also Tertullian *Against Praxeas* 7. [86]Ps 82:6 (81:6 LXX, Vg). [87]NPNF 2 9:122. [88]NPNF 2 7:338. [89]Tit 2:13. [90]Rom 9:5. [91]Phil 2:6. [92]Rom 1:7. [93]Jn 4:24. [94]NPNF 1 14:18**.

Deity of the Son. Cyril of Alexandria: The one who bore within him the Spirit was not ignorant that some should arise in the last times who would accuse the essence of the Only Begotten and "deny the Lord that bought them."[95] These suppose that the Word who appeared from God the Father is not by nature God but rather bring in besides him some, so to speak, spurious and false-called god having the name of Sonship and Deity, but this not really being the case. . . .

It was almost as though someone was already resisting the words of truth and almost saying to the holy Evangelist: " 'The Word was with God.' And so it was. We agree fully to what you have written concerning this. The Father has being and exists separately, and the Son is the same way. What now should one suppose that the Word is by nature? For his being with God does not at all reveal his essence. But since the divine Scriptures proclaim one God, this pertains to the Father only with whom the Word was."

What then does truth's herald reply? Not only was "the Word" with God, but he was also "God." Through his being with God, he might be known to be other than the Father and might be believed to be Son distinct and by himself. Through being "God," he might be conceived of as consubstantial and of him by nature as being both God and coming forth from God. For it were inconceivable, since the Godhead is by all confessed to be one, that the holy Trinity should not in every possible way arrive at sameness of essence and so reach one relation of Godhead. He "was" then also "God." He did not become so at last, but he "was," if indeed eternal being will most specially and surely follow on being God. For that which became in time, or was at all brought from not being into being, will not be by nature God. Seeing then that God the Word has eternity through the word *was,* consubstantiality with the Father through being "God," how great punishment and vengeance must we necessarily think that they shall be found to incur who think that he is in any way inferior or unlike him who begat him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.3.[96]

The Word of God Is Yahweh, the One Who Is. Ambrose: Let the soul that wishes to approach God raise itself from the body and cling always to that highest Good that is divine and lasts forever and that was from the beginning and that was with God, that is, the Word of God. This is the divine Being "in which we live and are and move."[97] This was in the beginning, this is "The Son of God, Jesus Christ in you," he says, "in whom there was not yes and no, but only yes was in him."[98] He himself told Moses to say, "He who is has sent me."[99] Letter 79.[100]

[95]2 Pet 2:1. [96]LF 43:22-23**. See also Ambrose *Letter* 79; *Concerning Virgins* 3.1.2. [97]Acts 17:28. [98]2 Cor 1:19. [99]Ex 3:14. [100]FC 26:443.

THE CREATIVE WORD AS LIFE AND LIGHT JOHN 1:2-5

Overview: If the reader had heard that "the Word was God," without any further clarification, he might have been led to believe John was contradicting belief in one God; John 1:2, however, clarifies the eternity and divinity of that same Word (Hilary) while preserving his distinction as a person in the Godhead, coeternal with the Father (Chrysostom) as one who has absolute existence (Hilary). As such, he is still not devoid of a beginning, but he was always coexistent with his beginning (Theodore). John, in effect, summarizes the first three propositions of John 1:1 in John 1:2 (Origen). But this is not only a summation; the demonstrative pronoun "this" ensures that his readers will not posit a second Word or deity (Cyril of Alexandria). One may wonder why he does not qualify the Word as well then by calling it the "Word *of God*," but John omits the qualification here[1] to show that this Word is not one among many different words but is the Word that encompasses all other words, wisdom and truth (Origen).

Christ as the Word is the architect of creation; he is Wisdom who resides in the Father's heart—the wisdom uttered that brought about the act of creation (Prudentius). John here distinguishes this creator from his creation (Theodore), focusing more on the creator than the creation and thus moving beyond the account of Moses in Genesis (Chrysostom). His purpose is also to show that the Word itself was not made, since the Word made everything. And, if the Word is not a creature, then it must be of one substance with the Father, since "all substance that is not God is creature, and all that is not creature is God" (Augustine). But some have asked whether the Word is shown to be inferior here since it is only an agent of creation rather than the creator (Cyril of Alexandria). John, however, phrased the Son's role in this way to prevent anyone from thinking that the Son is the unbegotten one (Chrysostom). Rather than pitting the persons against one another in the act of creation, it should be clear that creation, as well as all that God does, is a trinitarian activity, the Son being both the Creator and the agent of creation (Ambrose).

John takes up where Moses left off, encompassing not only the visible creation in the *all things* of the previous phrase but everything else as well, including invisible things (Chrysostom). He further qualifies his own earlier statement that "all things were made through him" by adding "without him was nothing made," thereby drawing out the distinction between the creator and his companion both present at creation[2] (Hilary). He is not, however, including sin, wickedness and evil in the realm of created things. These are subsumed under those things that are not, which John here calls "nothing" because they are made without the Word (Origen). Sin, too, is nothing because it comes about without the Word, and nothing is what we become when we give in to it. But thank God that Christ was willing to make himself nothing, even though he made everything, in order to make us rich in his love (Augustine).

John 1:4 can be read in a couple of different ways due to the textual variant "that which was made" being appended to the beginning of verse four or to the end of John 1:3. Verse four then can either be read as, "That which was made in him was life" (Hilary), or simply, "In him was life." Some manipulate the punctuation in an attempt to prove that the Holy Spirit is a creature that was created by the Word (Chrysostom) or to emphasize Christ's creative work at the expense of that of the Father and the Spirit (Jerome). But when the text is read as "That which was made in him was life," it can also be understood correctly of the Son, who is the life and who gives life to those who believe in him, since no one can live apart from him (Origen). They were created *in* him because their design was in him as a concept is in a designer, and they were created *through* him as he is the agent of creation (Augustine). Either way, the Word is a fountain of life that is never depleted no matter how much it is accessed and

[1]Although he includes it in Rev 19:13. [2]See Prov 8:27-30.

that makes possible our resurrection (Chrysostom). He is the one who brought life to us even as he accepted our death (Augustine). When we receive that life, it also becomes the foundation for the light of knowledge (Origen).

The Word of God is not only truly light but is also the giver of light (Cyril of Alexandria). A blind person may be in the presence of the sun so that the sun is present to him, but he is absent from the sun due to his blindness (Augustine). We need not remain in this darkness as though it were a part of our nature that cannot be overcome, however, since Paul proclaims, "You were once darkness, but now you are light" (Origen). God sometimes gives us darkness as a trial to endure, but he never leaves us there in the dark. Through Christ we emerge into his light stronger for having struggled with the darkness (Isaac), knowing that everything is ultimately brought to light by the Lord (Ambrose). The light is chased by the darkness as the darkness seeks to overpower the light (Gregory of Nazianzus). Darkness, however, will not prevail because if God is for us, who can prevail against us (Origen)? The text also may be understood to say that the darkness has not comprehended the light because it does not know the creator, nor is it receptive to his radiance (Cyril of Alexandria).

In summary, because of the profound wisdom they offer, these five verses should be engraved in gold in every church (Augustine).

1:2 *This One Was in the Beginning with God*

No Contradiction with Belief in One God. Hilary of Poitiers: But I tremble to say it; the audacity staggers me. I hear, "And the Word was God"—I, who have been taught by the prophets that God is one. To save me from further apprehension, my friend, the fisherman, needs to provide a fuller understanding of this great mystery. Show me that these assertions are consistent with the unity of God; that there is no blasphemy in them, no explaining away, no denial of eternity. And so he continues, "He was in the beginning with God." This "He was in the beginning" removes the limit of time; the word *God* shows that he is more than a voice; that "he is *with* God" proves that he neither encroaches nor is encroached on, for his identity is not swallowed up in that of Another, and he—that is, his one and only begotten Son—is clearly stated to be present with the one unbegotten God as God. On the Trinity 2.16.[3]

The Word's Coeternity with the Father. Chrysostom: As therefore the expression "in the beginning was the Word" shows his eternity, so "was in the beginning with God" has declared to us his coeternity. For, so that you may not think the Word is eternal when you hear "in the beginning was the Word," but yet imagine the life of the Father to differ from his by some interval and longer duration and thus assign a beginning to the Only Begotten—this is why John adds, "was in the beginning with God." He exists eternally even as the Father himself does, for the Father was never without the Word, but he was always God with God, yet each in his proper person. . . . So that no one might suppose the Godhead of the Son to be inferior, he immediately added the characteristics of genuine Godhead, including eternity (for "He was," says he, "in the beginning with God,") and attributed to him the office of Creator. For "by him were all things made." Homilies on the Gospel of John 4.1, 3.[4]

The Word's Absolute Existence and Eternity as God. Hilary of Poitiers: The backward straining of our thoughts can never grasp anything prior to God's property of absolute existence since nothing presents itself to enable us to understand the nature of God, even though we might go on seeking it forever—nothing, that is, except the fact that God always is. That then which has both been declared about God by Moses, that of which our human intelligence can give no further explanation, *that* [is]

[3]NPNF 2 9:56-57**. [4]NPNF 1 14:16-18**.

the very quality the Gospels testify to be a property of God the only begotten since in the beginning was the Word, and since the Word was with God, and since he was the true Light, and since God the only begotten is in the bosom of the Father,[5] and since Jesus Christ is God over all.[6]

Therefore he *was* and he *is,* since he is from him who always is what he is. But to be from him, that is to say, to be from the Father, is birth. Moreover, to be always from him, who always is, is eternity; but this eternity is derived not from himself but from the Eternal. And from the Eternal nothing can spring but what is eternal: for if the offspring is not eternal, then neither is the Father, who is the source of generation, eternal. On the Trinity 12.24-25.[7]

The "Word" Is Always Coexistent with His Beginning. Theodore of Mopsuestia: John wanted to persuade by using the name "Word," as if by an analogy, that it was possible for something to be from something else without having to be separated from it by length of time. . . . Also, because he said "he was in the beginning," he showed not that he was without a beginning but rather that he was coexistent from eternity with his beginning. Commentary on John 1.1.1.[8]

Summing Up. Origen: After the Evangelist has taught us the three orders through the three propositions that were previously mentioned, he sums up the three under one head, saying, "The same was in the beginning with God."

Now we have learned from the three propositions first, in what the Word was, namely, "in the beginning," and with whom he was, namely, "God," and who the Word was, namely, "God." It is as if, therefore, he indicates the previously mentioned God the Word by the expression "the same" and gathers the three, "in the beginning was the Word" and "The Word was with God, and the Word was God," into a fourth proposition and says, "The same was in the beginning with God." Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.34-35.[9]

"This" Is an Important Addition. Cyril of Alexandria: The Evangelist here makes a sort of recapitulation of what had already been said. But when he adds the word *this,* he is all but crying aloud, "He who is in the beginning, the Word with the Father, he who is God of God, he it is and no one else who is the subject of this august book." But he seems again not idly to add to what has been said, "This was in the beginning with God." For he, enlightened by the divine Spirit about the future, was not ignorant . . . that certain people would appear, . . . who would rise up and strive against their own leader, saying that one is the word that is conceived in God the Father, and that the other, who is very similar and like the conceived one, is the Son and Word through whom God works all things. In this way he might be [falsely] conceived of as word of word and image of image and radiance of radiance.

The blessed Evangelist, then, as though he had already heard them blaspheming, and having already defined and shown by many words that the Word is one and only and truly of God and in God and with God—with flashing eye adds, "This was in the beginning with God," as Son, that is, with the Father, as inborn, as of his [the Father's] essence, as only begotten—*this* one, there being no second. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.4.[10]

Why Did Not John Say "Word of God"? Origen: Someone perhaps may ask with good reason why it was not said, "In the beginning was the Word *of God,* and the Word *of God* was with God, and the Word *of God* was God." But one who asks this . . . is proposing that there are many words, and perhaps different kinds of words of which one is the word of God, and another, let us say, is the word of angels, and another the word of people. . . .

For every person imaginable would admit

[5]Jn 1:1, 9, 18. [6]Rom 9:5. [7]NPNF 2 9:224**. [8]CSCO 4 3:23-24. [9]FC 80:103; SC 120:230. [10]LF 43:34-35*.

that the truth is one. No one would dare say, in the case of [truth] too, that the truth of God is one thing, and that of the angels is another, and that of people still another. For it belongs to the nature of beings that the truth concerning each is one. . . . And if truth is one and wisdom is one, the Word also, who announces the truth and wisdom simply and openly to those capable of apprehending it, would be one. And we say these things, not to deny that the truth and wisdom and the Word are of God but to show the advantage of the omission of the phrase "of God." Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.37, 39-41.[11]

1:3a *All Things Were Made by Him*

Creating While in the Bosom of the Father. Prudentius:

Though you came from the mouth of God,
Born as his Word on earth below,
Yet as his Wisdom you lived
Forever in the Father's heart.

This Wisdom uttered made the sky,
The sky and light and all besides;[12]
All by the Word's almighty power
Were fashioned, for the Word was God.

But when the universe was formed
And ordered by unchanging laws,
The Cause and architect divine
In the Father's bosom still remained,[13]

Until the slow revolving years
In centuries at length had passed,[14]
And he himself condescended to come
Down to the world grown old in sin. . . .

But such destruction of humankind
The heart of Christ could not endure;
And lest his Father's handiwork,
Unvindicated, should be lost,

He clothed himself in mortal flesh,
That by arising from the tomb
He might unlock the chains of death
And bring man to his Father's house.

This is your natal day, on which
The high Creator sent you forth,[15]
And gave to you a form of clay,
Uniting flesh with his own Word.

Hymns for Every Day 11, A Hymn for Christmas Day.[16]

The Son Compared with Created Things. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Intending to make the divinity of the Only Begotten clearer, [the Evangelist] wanted to show the difference [of the Son] not only by indicating his dignity but also by demonstrating that he has no participation with the created order. He says, "[The Word] was with God in the beginning," and "All things were made through him." By saying this, he has opposed[17] himself to "all things made." He was, he says, in the beginning with God, all creatures were made through him. And clearly he made a comparison with "in the beginning was," and its opposite, "all things were made through him." Therefore he was not made, because in the beginning he was; they *were* made because they did not exist before. He himself is the explanation of the precedents. He shows what he means through the words "In the beginning was," clearly asserting his eternity. Commentary on John 1.1.2-3.[18]

John Moves Beyond Moses and Creation to the Creator. Chrysostom: Moses in the beginning of the history and writings of the Old Testament speaks to us of the objects of sense and enumerates them to us at length. For "in the beginning," he says, "God made the heaven and the earth," and then he adds that light was created, and a second heaven and the stars, the various kinds of living creatures, and (that we may

[11]FC 80:104-5; SC 120:232. [12]Prov 8:28-30. [13]Jn 1:18. [14]See Virgil *Aeneid* 6.748. [15]Lat *te spiravit*, literally, "breathed you forth." [16]FC 43:78-80*. [17]Contrasted himself with. [18]CSCO 4 3:24.

not delay by going through particulars) everything else. But this Evangelist, cutting to the quick, includes both these things and the things that are above these in a single sentence. He does this because they were known to his hearers and because he is hurrying on to a greater subject. His treatise is not so much about the works as about the Creator and him who produced them all. And therefore Moses, though he has selected the smaller portion of the creation (for he has spoken nothing to us concerning the invisible powers), dwells on these things;[19] while John, as hurrying to ascend to the Creator himself, passes over both of these things and those on which Moses was silent, having comprised them in one little saying: "All things were made by him." Homilies on the Gospel of John 5.1.[20]

The Word Was Not Made. Augustine: Let someone of the unbelieving Arians come forward now and say that the Word of God was made.[21] How can it happen that the Word of God was made when God made all things through the Word? If even the Word of God itself was made, through what other Word was it made? If you say that there is a Word of the Word, through which that [Word] was made, I say that this itself is the only Son of God. If you deny there is a Word of the Word, grant that that through which all things were made was itself not made. For that through which all things were made could not be made through itself. Tractates on the Gospel of John 1.11.1.[22]

The Word Is of One Substance with the Father. Augustine: And if he was not made, then he is not a creature; but if he is not a creature, then he is of the same substance with the Father. For all substance that is not God is creature, and all that is not creature is God.[23] And if the Son is not of the same substance with the Father, then he is a substance that was made; and if he is a substance that was made, then all things were not made by him; but "all things were made by him," therefore he is of one and the same substance with the Father. And so, he is not only God but also very God. On the Trinity 1.6 [9].[24]

Is Christ Only an Agent of Creation? Cyril of Alexandria: The fact that "all things were made *through* him," will not, I think, cause any damage concerning what is said about the Son. For the Son is not introduced here as an employee or servant of someone else's will just because it says that the things that exist were made *through* him, implying that he should be no longer conceived of as being by nature Creator. Nor is he someone who was given the power of creation by someone else, but rather being himself alone the strength of God the Father, as Son, as only begotten, he works all things, the Father and the Holy Spirit co-working and coexisting with him. For all things are from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. And we conceive of the Father as coexisting with the Son, not as though he were powerless to bring anything into existence but rather as one who is wholly in [the Son] because of the unchangeableness of essence. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.5.[25]

The Word "Through"[26] Should Not Overly Perplex Us. Chrysostom: Paul, inspired by the same grace, said, "For by him were all things created."[27] . . . But if you think that the expression "through" is a mark of inferiority (as making Christ an instrument), listen to what [David] says: "You, Lord, in the beginning, have laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands."[28] He says of the Son what is said of the Father in his character of Cre-

[19]The visible creation. [20]NPNF 1 14:21*. [21]See also Ambrose's refutation, *On the Christian Faith* 1.14.88. [22]FC 78:50. On the Spirit not being created, see Chrysostom below on Jn 1:4. [23]Augustine here postulates the theistic doctrines of two substances—infinite and finite; in contradiction to the postulate of pantheism, that there is only one substance—the infinite. [24]NPNF 1 3:21-22*. [25]LF 43:52**. [26]Gk *dia*, which with the genitive can also mean "by." [27]Col 1:16. [28]Ps 102:25 (101:26 LXX).

ator. This is something he would not have said unless he had thought of him as he thought of a Creator and yet not subservient to any. And if the expression "through him" is used here, it is for no other reason than to prevent anyone from thinking that Son is unbegotten. For listen to Christ himself tell how, with respect to the title of Creator, he is nothing inferior to the Father: "As the Father raises up the dead and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom he will."[29] If now in the Old Testament it is said of the Son, "You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth," his title of Creator is plain. But if you say that the prophet spoke this of the Father and that Paul attributed to the Son what was said of the Father, even so the conclusion is the same. For Paul would not have decided that the same expression suited the Son, unless he had been very confident that between Father and Son there was an equality of honor. Homilies on the Gospel of John 5.2.[30]

The Son Is by No Means Separated from the Father. Ambrose: He himself who calls the Son of God the maker even of heavenly things has also plainly said that all things were made in the Son, that in the renewal of his works he might by no means separate the Son from the Father but unite him to the Father. On the Holy Spirit 3.11.83.[31]

1:3b *Without Him Was Nothing Made*

All Things Visible or Invisible Created by Christ. Chrysostom: And that you may not think that he merely speaks of all the things mentioned by Moses, he adds that "without him was not anything made that was made." That is to say, that of created things, not one—whether it be visible or intelligible—was brought into being without the power of the Son. Homilies on the Gospel of John 5.1.[32]

Distinction Between Creator and Companion. Hilary of Poitiers: "All things were made through him" needs qualification. There is the Unbegotten who no one made; there is also the Son, begotten of the unborn Father. "All things" is an unguarded statement, admitting no exceptions. While we are silent, not daring to answer or trying to think of some reply, you [John] break in with, "And without him was nothing made." You have restored the author of the Godhead to his place while proclaiming that he has a companion. From your saying that nothing was made "without him," I learn that he was not alone. He through whom the work was done is one; he without whom it was not done is another: a distinction is drawn between Creator and Companion.

Reverence for the one unbegotten Creator distressed me, lest in your sweeping assertion that all things were made by the Word you had included him. You have banished my fears by your "without him was nothing made." Yet this same "without him was nothing made" brings its own trouble and distraction. There was, then, something made by that other; not made, it is true, "without him." If the other did make anything, even if the Word were present at the making, then it is untrue that "through him all things were made." It is one thing to be the Creator's Companion, quite another to be the Creator's self. I could find answers of my own to the previous objections; in this case, fisherman, I can only turn at once to your words, "All things were made through him." And now I understand, for the apostle has enlightened me with these words: "Things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all are "through" him and "in him."[33] On the Trinity 2.18-19.[34]

Made Not Only *Through* but *By* the Word. Origen: Now let us see why the state-

[29]Jn 5:21. [30]NPNF 1 14:22-23**. [31]NPNF 2 10:147*. See also his *Hexameron* 1.29 and Augustine *Sermon* 52.4. [32]NPNF 1 14:21*. [33]Col 1:16. [34]NPNF 2 9:57*. See below on Jn 1:4, where his argument continues, and also Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechetical Lectures* 11.21.

ment "And without him was not anything made" is added. Some might think it superfluous to subjoin "without him was not anything made" to "all things were made through him." For if every conceivable thing has been made "through the Word," nothing has been made "without the Word." That all things have been made *through* the Word, however, does not now follow from the assertion that nothing has been made without the Word. It is possible that not only have all things been made *through* the Word but also that some things have been made *by* the Word.

We must know, therefore, how the expression "all things" is to be understood and how "nothing" should be understood. For it is possible, if both expressions have not been made clear, to take it to mean that if all things were made through the Word, and evil and all the profusion of sin and wickedness belong to the "all things," that these too, were made through the Word. But this is a false conclusion. For . . . it is not surprising that all creatures have been made through the Word . . . but this does not now follow also for acts of sin and falling away. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.91-92.[35]

Not-Being and Nothing Are Synonyms. Origen: So far as the meaning of "nothing" and "not being" are concerned, they will appear to be synonyms. "Not being" would be meant by "nothing," and "nothing" by "not being." The apostle indeed appears to use the expression "those things that are not" not for things that exist nowhere but for things that are wicked, considering "those things that are not" to be things that are bad. For he says, "God called those things that are not as those that are."[36] . . . "Not being" and "nothing" are synonyms, and for this reason those "who are not" are "nothing," and all evil is "nothing," since it too is "not being." And evil, which is called "nothing," has been made without the Word, not being included in "all things." We have presented then to the best of our ability, what the "all things" are that have been made through the Word, and what that is which was made without him, and, because it never was, is also for this reason called "nothing." Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.94, 99.[37]

Human Beings Become Nothing When They Sin. Augustine: Certainly sin was not made through him, and it is clear that sin is nothing and that human beings become nothing when they sin. And an idol was not made through the Word. Indeed an idol has a certain shape, but humankind has been made through the Word. For the form of humanity in the idol was not made through the Word. And it has been written, "We know that an idol is nothing."[38] These things, then, were not made through the Word; but whatever things were made through the agency of nature, whatever exist in creation, all things of all kinds whatsoever—from the angel to the grubworm—[these are what were made by the Word]. Tractates on the Gospel of John 1.13.1.[39]

Christ, the Maker of All, Is the Model of Authentic Poverty. Augustine: We have found the genuine poor person. We have found him to be kind and humble, not trusting in himself, truly poor, a member of the poor man, who became poor for our sake, though he was rich. Look at this rich man of ours, who "for our sake became poor, though he was rich;"[40] see how rich he is: "All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing." There is more to making gold than to having it. You are rich in gold, silver, flocks, household, farms, produce; you were unable to create these things for yourself, though. See how rich he is: "All things were made though him." See how poor he is: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."[41] Who can fittingly reflect on his riches, how he makes and is not made, how he creates and is not created, is not formed but forms, forms changeable

[35]FC 80:118, SC 120:264-66. [36]Rom 4:17. [37]FC 80:119-20*, SC 120:268-70. In this section Origen also tells why the devil is included in creation. [38]1 Cor 8:4. [39]FC 78:52. [40]2 Cor 8:9. [41]Jn 1:14.

things while changelessly abiding ephemeral things while he himself is everlasting? Who can fittingly ponder his riches? Let us ponder his poverty instead, in case being poor ourselves we may just be able to grasp it. Sermon 14.9.[42]

1:4a *In Him Was Life*

He Has Always Been Life. Hilary of Poitiers: Since then, all things were made through him, come to our help and tell us what it was that was made not without him.[43] "That which was made in him is life." That which was *in him* was certainly not made *without him*, for that which was made in him was also made *through him*. All things were created in him and through him. They were created in him,[44] for he was born as God the Creator. Again, nothing that was made in him was made without him, for the reason that God the begotten was life and was born as life, not made life after his birth; for there are not two elements in him, one inborn and one afterwards conferred. There is no interval in his case between birth and maturity. None of the things that were created in him was made without him, for he is the life that made their creation possible. Moreover God, the Son of God, became God by virtue of his birth, not after he was born. Being born the Living from the Living, the True from the True, the Perfect from the Perfect, he was born in full possession of his powers. He did not need to learn in the time that followed what his birth was, but was conscious of his Godhead by the very fact that he was born as God of God. On the Trinity 2.20.[45]

The Spirit Is Not Included in What Was Created. Chrysostom: We will not put the break at "without him was not any thing made," as the heretics do. For they are trying to prove the Holy Spirit is a creature and so read, "That which was made in him was life." But this cannot be so understood. For first of all, this was not the place for mentioning the Holy Spirit. . . . But let us suppose it was; let us take the passage for the present according to their reading, and we shall see that it leads to a difficulty. For when it is said, "That which was made in him was life," they say the life spoken of is the Spirit. But this life is also light, for the Evangelist proceeds, "The life was the light of men [humankind]." And so, according to them, "light of men" here means the Spirit. . . . But the Word mentioned above is what he here calls consecutively God and life and light. If now this Word was life and if this Word and the life became flesh . . . it follows that the Spirit is incarnate, not the Son. . . .

Dismissing then this reading, we adopt a more suitable one, with the following meaning: "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." There we make a break and begin a fresh sentence: "In him was life. Without him was not any thing made which was as made," that is, that could be made. You see how by this short addition he removes any difficulty that might follow. For by introducing "without him was not any thing made" and adding "which was made," he includes all things invisible but excludes the Spirit. . . . For the Spirit is uncreated. Do you see the precision of his teaching? Homilies on the Gospel of John 5.1-2.[46]

The Trinity Involved in Creation. Jerome: Many read this inaccurately because they add without any punctuation, "that which has been made in him was life." The correct statement is "All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing that has been made," meaning that that which has been made without him has not been made.[47] . . . Now, if all things were made through him, is the Father, on that account, excluded from creation, or Holy Spirit, and has the Son alone worked? Because the Evangelist had said, "All things were made

[42]*WSA* 3 1:320-21*. See also *Sermon* 265E.2; *Sermon* 239.6 for similar treatments of Christ's poverty on our behalf using this passage. [43]See Hilary's argument above in Jn 1:3b. [44]Potentially. [45]NPNF 2 9:57*. [46]NPNF 1 14:21-22**. [47]Jerome goes on to conclude that the Holy Spirit was also not among those things created, as did many other patristic authors.

through him," lest he take away creation from the Holy Spirit and the Father, he added, "And without him was made nothing that has been made." When he says, "without him was made nothing," he reveals that another has made but has made nothing without him. Homily 87, On John 1:1-14.[48]

There Is Life Only in Christ. Origen: Our Savior is said to be some things not for himself but for others; others again, both for himself and others. . . . When it is said then, "That which was made in him was life" . . . we must inquire whether the life is for himself and others or for others only; and if for others, for whom? Now the Life and the Light are both the same person: he is "the light of men [humanity]"; he is therefore their life. The Savior is called Life here, not to himself but to others whose Light he also is. . . .

This life is inseparable from the Word, from the time it is added on to it. For Reason or the Word must exist before in the soul, cleansing it from sin, till it is pure enough to receive the life, which is thus engrafted or inborn in everyone who renders himself fit to receive the Word of God. And so, observe . . . that though the Word itself in the beginning was not made—the beginning never having been without the Word—yet the life of people was not always in the Word. This life of people was *made* in the sense that it was the light of people. And this light of people could not be before humankind was; the light of people being understood relatively to people. . . .

And therefore he says, "that which was made in the Word was life," and not "that which was in the Word was life." Some copies read, and perhaps not without credibility, "that which was made, in him is life." If we understand the life in the Word, to be he who says below, "I am the life," we shall confess that none who believe not in Christ live, and that all who live not in God, are dead. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.128-32.[49]

All Living Things Subsist in Christ. Augustine: But how were all things made by him? "That, which was made, in him is life." It can also be read, "That, which was made in him, is life," and if we read it this way, everything is life. For what is there that was not made in him? For he is the wisdom of God, and it is said in the psalm, "In Wisdom you have made all things."[50] If then Christ is the wisdom of God, and the psalm says, "In wisdom you have made all things," since all things were made *by* him all things were also made *in* him. If, then, all things were made in him, dearly beloved brothers, and that, which was made in him, is life, both the earth is life and wood is life. We do indeed say wood is life, but in the sense of the wood of the cross from which we have received life. A stone, then, is life. But this is an unseemly way to read this passage. . . . Rather, read it this way: "That which was made;" here make a short pause and then go on, "in him is life." What is the meaning of this? The earth was made, but the very earth that was made is not life; but there exists spiritually in the wisdom itself a certain reason by which the earth was made: this [reason] is life.

As far as I can, I shall explain my meaning to you, beloved. A carpenter makes a box. First he has the box in design; for if he had it not in design, how could he produce it by workmanship? But the box in theory is not the very box as it appears to the eyes. It exists invisibly in design; it will be visible in the work. Behold, it is made in the work; has it ceased to exist in design? The one is made in the work, and the other remains that exists in design; for that box may rot and another be fashioned according to that which exists in design. Listen, then, to the box as it is in design and the box as it is in fact; the actual box is not life, the box in design is life; because the soul of the artificer, where all these things are before they are brought forth, is living. So, dearly beloved brothers, because the wisdom of God, by which all things have been made, contains every-

[48]FC 57:214*. [49]FC 80:128-29**; SC 120:292-94. [50]Ps 104:24 (103:24 LXX, Vg).

thing according to design before it is made, therefore those things that are made through this design itself are not immediately life, but whatever has been made is life in him. Tractates on the Gospel of John 1.16-17.[51]

The Fountain of Life. Chrysostom: John spoke of the work of creation, that "all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." And so now he goes on to speak concerning his providence, where he says, "In him was life." That no one may doubt how so many and so great things were "made by him," he adds, "In him was life." For as [it is] with the fountain, which is the mother of the great deeps—however much you take away, you do not lessen the fountain—so [it is] with the energy of the Only Begotten. However much you believe has been produced and made by it, it has not diminished. Or, to use a more familiar example, I will use the instance of light, which the apostle himself added immediately, saying, "And the life was the light." Light, however many millions of times it may enlighten, suffers no diminution of its own brightness. In the same way also God, before commencing his work and after completing it, remains alike indefectible, undiminished, unwearied by the greatness of the creation. No, if it were necessary that ten thousand or even an infinite number of such worlds were created, he still remains the same, sufficient for them all not merely to produce but also to control them after their creation. For the word *life* here refers not merely to the act of creation but also to the providence engaged in maintaining the things created. Homilies on the Gospel of John 5.3.[52]

Inklings of the Resurrection. Chrysostom: It also lays down beforehand the doctrine of the resurrection and is the beginning of these marvelous good tidings, since when "life" has come to be with us, the power of death is dissolved; and when "light" has shone upon us, there is no longer darkness, but life always remains within us, and death cannot overcome it. So that what is asserted of the Father might be asserted absolutely of [Christ] also, that "in him we live and move and have our being."[53] As Paul has shown when he says, "By him were all things created" and "by him all things consist." Thus, [Christ] has been called also "root" and "foundation." Homilies on the Gospel of John 5.3.[54]

1:4b *The Life Was the Light*

He Brought Life to Us. Augustine: From where do we get life, from where does he get death? Just look at him: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."[55] Look for death there. Where? Where from? What sort of Word? The Word with God, the Word that was God. If you can find flesh and blood there, you can find death. So where did death come from for that Word? On the other hand, where did life come from for us human beings, stuck on the earth, mortal, perishable, sinners? He had nothing where he could get death from; we had nothing where we could get life from. He accepted death from what was ours, in order to give us life from what was his. How did he get death from what was ours? "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."[56] He accepted from us here what he would offer for us. And where did life come from for us? "And the life was the light of men." He was life for us; we were death for him. Sermon 232.5.[57]

Life As Enlightenment. Origen: Let us not fail to notice that while it could have been written, "What was made in him was the light of men, and the light of men was life," John has done the reverse. For he places "the life" before the "light of men," although "life" and "light of men" are the same. . . .

Why isn't the "Word" said to be the "light of

[51]NPNF 1 7:12**. [52]NPNF 1 14:23*. [53]See Col 1:16-17. [54]NPNF 1 14:23*. [55]Jn 1:1. [56]Jn 1:14. [57]*WSA* 3 7:26. Ambrose brings in the imagery of the tree of life in Eden. See *Death as a Good* 4.13; 12.53.

men," instead of the "life" that was made in the Word? . . . The "life" mentioned there is not that life that makes both rational and irrational beings [alive]. It is instead the life that is added to the Word, which is completed in us when a share from the first Word is received. And so, when we turn away from what seems to be life but really is not and we yearn to truly possess life—that is when we first share in it. Once this [kind of] life exists in us, it also becomes the foundation of the light of knowledge.

And perhaps this life is light potentially (and not actually) for those who really do not want to learn, but with others it becomes light also in actuality. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.153, 156-57.[58]

1:5a *The Light Shines in the Darkness*

The Light and Giver of Light. Cyril of Alexandria: The most wise Evangelist now expands the thought expressed above. . . . Not only is the Word of God indeed truly light, but he is also the giver of light to all whom he infuses with the light of understanding. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.7.[59]

A Blind Person Cannot See the Sun's Light. Augustine: But perhaps the foolish hearts cannot receive that light because they are so encumbered with sins that they cannot see it. Let them not on that account think that the light is in any way absent, because they are not able to see it. For they, because of their sins, are darkness. . . . For suppose, as in the case of a blind person placed in the sun, the sun is present to him, but he is absent from the sun. This is how every foolish person, every unjust person, every irreligious person is blind in heart. Wisdom is present, but it is present to a blind person and is absent from his eyes; not because it is absent from him but because he is absent from it. What then is he to do? Let him become pure, that he may be able to see God.[60] Tractates on the Gospel of John 1.19.[61]

Darkness Is Not an Irrevocable Part of Our Nature. Origen: People are not [darkness] by nature, since Paul says, "For we were once darkness but now are light in the Lord,"[62] and this is especially the case if we are now called saints and spiritual. Just as Paul, although he was darkness, became capable of becoming light in the Lord, so may anyone who was once darkness. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.134.[63]

Christ Overcomes Our Prison of Darkness. Isaac of Nineveh: Let us not be troubled when we are plunged into darkness, especially if we are not the cause of it ourselves. For this darkness is brought about by divine providence for reasons that are known only to God. Our soul becomes suffocated and placed, as it were, in the middle of a storm system. Even if someone tries to approach Scripture—or whatever he approaches, it is only darkness on darkness that he finds instead that causes him to give up. How often is it that he is not even allowed to approach. He is totally incapable of believing that any other possibilities are out there that might give him some peace again. It is an hour filled with despair and fear! The soul is utterly deprived of hope in God and the consolation of faith. It is entirely filled with doubt and fear.

But those who have been tested by the distress of such an hour know that in the end it is followed by a change. God never leaves the soul for a whole day in such a state, otherwise it would lose life and all Christian hope. . . . Rather, he allows it to emerge very soon from the darkness. Blessed is he who endures such temptations. For, as the Fathers say, great will be the stability and the strength to which he will come after that. This struggle will not be over all at once, however; neither will grace come and dwell in the soul completely at once, but gradually. After grace, the trial returns. Sometimes there is temptation, sometimes consolation. . . . We do not expect complete

[58]FC 80:135-36**; SC 120:306-10. [59]LF 43:67**. [60]Mt 5:8. [61]NPNF 1 7:13**. [62]Eph 5:8. [63]FC 80:130**; SC 120:296.

deliverance from it here, nor do we expect complete consolation. Ascetical Homily 48.[64]

1:5b *Darkness Does Not Overcome Light*

Darkness Does Not Prevent Light from Being Seen. Ambrose: The person who supposes that he is protected by the darkness is vain, since he cannot escape the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness grasped it not. Accordingly, he is discovered like a fugitive and a wicked hireling and is recognized before he can conceal himself. For all things are known to the Lord before he seeks them out, not only past events but also those that are to come. The Prayer of Job and David 1.3.6.[65]

The Light Is Chased by the Darkness. Gregory of Nazianzus: The light shines in darkness, in this life and in the flesh, and is chased by the darkness but is not overtaken by it.[66] By this I mean the adverse power leaping up in its shamelessness against the visible Adam but encountering God and being defeated—in order that we, putting away the darkness, may draw near to the Light and may then become perfect Light, the children of perfect Light. On the Holy Lights, Oration 39.2.[67]

Darkness Goes on the Offensive. Origen: Christ, because of the benefit that follows for humankind, took our darkness on himself that by his power he might destroy our death[68] and completely destroy the darkness in our soul so that what Isaiah said might be fulfilled: "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light."[69]

This light, indeed, that was made in the Word, which also is life, "shines in the darkness" of our souls. It has come to stay where the world rulers of this darkness live.[70] They by wrestling with the human race struggle to subject those who do not stand firm in every manner to darkness. He comes that, when they have been enlightened, they may be called children of light. And this light shines in the darkness and is pursued by it, but it is not overcome. . . .

The darkness pursued this light, as is clear from what our Savior and his children suffer. The darkness fighting against the children of light wanted to chase the light away. However, if "God is for us," no one will be able to be "against us."[71] . . .

Now there are two ways that the darkness did not overcome the light. The darkness is either left very far behind it and, because it is slow, cannot keep up with the swiftness of the flight of light even to a limited extent, or, perhaps the light wanted to set an ambush for the darkness and awaited its approach and when the darkness drew near the light it was destroyed. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.166-70.[72]

Darkness Cannot Comprehend the Light. Cyril of Alexandria: "Darkness" is what John calls the nature that lacks illumination, that is, the whole originate nature. . . . For such a nature produces nothing on its own. Instead, it receives its whole being and well-being, such as it is, from its creator. This is why Paul says, "What do you have that you did not receive?"[73] And since, along with the rest, it receives its light from God, not possessing it on its own, it receives it. But that which does not have light of itself cannot be called anything but "darkness." The fact that "the Light shines in darkness" is a credible demonstration (in fact, one following from very necessity) that the creation is "darkness" while the Word of God is "Light." For if the nature of things originate receives the Word of God by participation, as Light, or as of Light, it receives it then since it is inherently darkness, and the Son "shines in it" as "the light" shines in "darkness," even though the darkness has no idea of the light's existence. For this, I suppose, is the meaning of "the darkness did

[64]*MTIN* 227-28**. [65]FC 65:332*. [66]See also Gregory's *Against Eunomius* 13.3, where he speaks of the darkness not even being able to approach the light. [67]NPNF 2 7:352*. See also Gregory's *On Virginity* 11. [68]See 2 Tim 1:10. [69]Is 9:2; Mt 4:16. [70]See Eph 6:12. [71]Rom 8:31. [72]FC 80:139-40**; SC 120:318-22. [73]1 Cor 4:7.

not comprehend it." For the Word of God shines upon all things that are receptive to his radiance and illumines without exception things that have a nature that is receptive to being illumined. But [the Word of God] is unknown by "the darkness." For that which is the rational nature upon earth, I mean *humanity*, "served the creature more than the Creator: it did not comprehend the Light,"[74] for it did not know the Creator, the fountain of wisdom, the beginning of understanding, the root of sense. Nevertheless, because of his love for humankind, things originate possess the light and are provided with the power of perception implanted concurrently with their passing into being. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.7.[75]

This Prologue Should Be Engraved in Gold in Every Church. Augustine: The old saint Simplicianus, afterwards bishop of Milan, used to tell me that a certain Platonist was in the habit of saying that this opening passage of the holy Gospel, entitled "According to John," should be written in letters of gold and hung up in all churches in the most conspicuous place. City of God 10.29.[76]

[74]Rom 1:25. [75]LF 43:68-69**. One might contrast this with Origen's more optimistic view of human nature above. [76]NPNF 1 2:200.

JOHN WITNESSES TO THE LIGHT JOHN 1:6-9

Overview: God sent a man, not an angel or other heavenly being, to testify to his Son's humanity (Augustine). This man, John the Baptist, was sent as a prophet and an apostle (Irenaeus), charged to speak nothing on his own but only what was given him to say (Jerome). John was the sound of Christ, who, in turn, is the speech of the Father (Origen). In order for his report to be believable, John the Evangelist enlists the help of John the Baptist so that his account might be attested by two or three witnesses (Cyril of Alexandria). It was important that John's testimony and those who preceded him be given in addition to Jesus' later miracles, because the glory of the miracles might fade over time, but the word remains (Origen). John testified to Christ, not because Christ needed the testimony but so that, as the Evangelist notes, "all might believe in him," having heard about him from a voice with which they could identify (Chrysostom). The Baptist was a witness and forerunner to the light—a light that our world of darkness sorely needs (Origen). The Son is the true light that has come into the world and that made the world (Athanasius). John, however, was only a lamp illuminated by Christ, who is the source of light (Augustine). This light enlightens everyone who comes into the world; however, anyone who closes his eyes to Christ's light will not be forced to see (Chrysostom). Those who do see are enlightened through

participation in that light, which shone forth at creation as the uncreated light and which glorifies us with his gifts (Cyril of Alexandria). Those who are called to be his lights must shine on the wooden lampstand of his cross (Augustine).

1:6 *John, a Man Sent from God*

A Man Sent to Testify to the One Who Is More Than Man. Augustine: Christ obviously neither came nor departed according to his Godhead since he is present everywhere and is contained in no place. But how did he come? He appeared as a man.

Therefore, because he was such a man, albeit that God lay hidden in him, there was sent before him a great man whose testimony would confirm that Christ was more than man. And who is this? "He was a man." Tractates on the Gospel of John 2.4-5.[1]

John Is Prophet and Apostle. Irenaeus: By what God, then, was John, the forerunner, who testifies of the Light, sent [into the world]? Truly it was by him of whom Gabriel is the angel, who also announced the glad tidings of his birth: [that God] who also had promised by the prophets that he would send his messenger before the face of his Son,[2] who should prepare his way, that is, that he should bear witness of that Light in the spirit and power of Elijah.[3] But, again, of what God was Elijah the servant and the prophet? Of him who made heaven and earth,[4] as he does himself confess. John, therefore, having been sent by the founder and maker of this world is . . . deemed "more than a prophet."[5] For all the other prophets preached the advent of the paternal Light and desired to be worthy of seeing him whom they preached. But John both announced [the advent] beforehand in the same way as the others did, and actually saw him when he came and pointed him out and persuaded many to believe on him, so that he did himself hold the place of both prophet and apostle. Against Heresies 3.11.4.[6]

Sent to the Office of Prophet and Apostle. Jerome: Where we say "sent," the Hebrew says, "one sent forth"; in Greek *apostolos,* in Hebrew *siloas*. You see, therefore, that this John, the prophet, is not only a prophet but also an apostle. Isaiah is sent; he was an apostle. "Here I am, send me!"[7] "Sent" is a term well said. . . . Those who have come on their own authority and have not been sent are the thieves and robbers.[8] But this man has been sent from God, "whose name was John" and whose name corresponds to his calling. The name "Ioannes" is interpreted as the grace of the Lord, for *io* means Lord, and *anna* means grace. And so John is called the grace of the Lord. His mission as messenger he receives from the Lord. Homily 87, On John 1:1-14.[9]

John Is the Voice That Predicts the Spoken Word. Origen: The fact that John was filled with the Holy Spirit while he was still in his mother's womb is an even more striking argument for John to have been sent from some other region[10] when he was placed in a body with no other purpose for his sojourn in life than his testimony to the light. Gabriel mentions that John was filled with the Spirit while still in his mother's womb when he announces the birth of John to Zechariah.[11] . . .

John is like sound[12] in relation to Christ, who is speech.[13] . . . John himself suggests this view since he once said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."[14] . . . And perhaps it is because Zechariah disbelieved in the birth of the voice that makes known the Word of God that he loses his voice and regains it when the voice that is the forerunner of the Word is born.[15] For a voice must be listened to so that the mind can afterwards receive the word revealed by the voice.

---

[1]NPNF 1 7:15**. [2]Mal 3:1. [3]Lk 1:17. [4]See 1 Kings 18:36. [5]Mt 11:9; Lk 7:26. [6]ANF 1:427*. [7]Is 6:8. [8]See Jn 10:8. [9]FC 57:216-17**. See also Chrysostom on the Baptist as apostle. [10]Origen speculated that John may have been an angel sent down as the forerunner of the Savior, see *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 2.186. [11]See Lk 1:35-36, 44. [12]Gk *phōnē*. [13]Gk *logos*. [14]See Mk 1:3. [15]See Lk 1:20, 64.

Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.180, 193-94.[16]

1:7 *John Comes to Testify to the Light*

The Need for Two or Three Witnesses. Cyril of Alexandria: Since, according to what was said by God through Moses, "At the mouth of two and three witnesses shall every word be established,"[17] wisely does [John the Evangelist] bring in addition to himself the blessed Baptist. . . . For he did not suppose that he ought, even if of gravest weight, to demand of the readers in his book concerning our Savior credence above that of the law, and that they should believe him by himself when declaring things above our understanding and sense. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.7.[18]

Prophecies and Miracles Testify to Christ. Origen: Some try to undo the testimonies of the prophets to Christ by saying that the Son of God had no need of such witnesses. . . . To this we may reply that where there are a number of reasons to make people believe, persons are often impressed by one kind of proof and not by another.

And with respect to the doctrine of the incarnation, it is certain that some have been forced by the prophetical writings into an admiration of Christ by the fact of so many prophets having, before his advent, fixed the place of his birth [and by other proofs of the same kind]. . . .

It is to be remembered too, that, though the display of miraculous powers might stimulate the faith of those who lived in the same age with Christ, they might, in the lapse of time, fail to do so; as some of them might even get to be regarded as fabulous. Prophecy and miracles together are more convincing than simply past miracles by themselves. . . . We must remember too that people receive honor themselves from the witness that they bear to God. . . .

He, therefore, who maintains that there is no need for the prophetic witness to Christ deprives the choir of prophets of their greatest gift. For what would prophecy, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit, have that is so great, if one exclude from it those matters related to the dispensation of our Lord? . . . John, too, therefore came to bear witness concerning the light. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.199, 202-4, 206, 208, 212.[19]

John's Human Voice for Human Listeners. Chrysostom: He could have proven that he had no need of that [herald's] testimony by showing himself in his unveiled essence, had he so chosen, and that would have confounded them all. But he did not do this because he would have annihilated everybody since no one could have endured the encounter of that unapproachable light. This is why he put on flesh and entrusted the witness [of himself] to one of our fellow servants, since everything he did was for the salvation of men and women, looking not only to his own honor but also to what might be more readily received by and profitable to his hearers. Homilies on the Gospel of John 6.1.[20]

1:8 *John Was Not the Light*

John Is a Forerunner of the Light. Origen: The Baptist's leaping for joy in the womb of Elizabeth at Mary's greeting was a testimony about Christ.[21] He was testifying to the divinity of Christ's conception and birth. For what indeed is John, except everywhere a witness and forerunner of Jesus? He precedes his birth and dies a little before the death of the Son of God, that, by appearing before the Christ not only to those in birth but also those awaiting the freedom from death through Christ, he might everywhere prepare for the Lord a prepared people. . . .

Now since there was the beginning in which the Word was . . . and since the Word also existed, and life was made in him, and the life was

[16]FC 80:143*, 147**; SC 120:328, 338. See also Augustine *Sermon* 293D.3. [17]Deut 19:15. [18]LF 43:69-70*. [19]FC 80:149-52**; SC 120:344-48, 352. [20]NPNF 1 14:26**. [21]Lk 1:44.

the light of people . . . why then did he not come "to give testimony of the life," or "to give testimony of the Word," or "of the beginning," or of any other aspect of the Christ whatsoever? Consider whether it is not [because] "the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light"[22] and because "the light shines in the darkness" and is not overcome by it. Those who are in darkness, that is, men and women, need light. For if the light "shines in the darkness"—there is no activity of darkness at all there—we shall share in other aspects of the Christ in which we do not now participate. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.224-27.[23]

Christ Is the True Light. Pseudo-Athanasius: It follows that the Word is the Son. But if the Son is the Light that has come into the world, beyond all dispute the world was made by the Son. For in the beginning of the Gospel, the Evangelist, speaking of John the Baptist, says, "He was not that Light, but that he might bear witness concerning that Light." For Christ himself was, as we have said before, the true Light that enlightens everyone that comes into the world. For if "he was in the world, and the world was made by him,"[24] of necessity he is the Word of God, concerning whom also the Evangelist witnesses that all things were made by him. For either they will be compelled to speak of two worlds, that the one may have come into being by the Son and the other by the Word, or, if the world is one and the creation one, it follows that Son and Word are one and the same before all creation, for by him it came into being. Fourth Discourse Against the Arians 19.[25]

John the Lamp, Christ the Light. Augustine: How right it was for the Lord to call [John] a lamp. This is what the Lord said about John: "He was a burning and a shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to exult in his light."[26] What, though, does John the Evangelist say about him? "There was a man sent by God, whose name was John; this man came for witness, to bear witness about the light; that man was not the light." Who? John the Baptist. Who says this? John the Evangelist. "That man was not the light." You say "that man was not the light," while the light itself says about him, "That man was a burning and a shining lamp? "But I know," he says, "what sort of light I am talking about; a light, I am well aware, in comparison with which a lamp is not a light." Listen to what comes next: "That was the true light that enlightens everyone coming into this world." John does not enlighten every person; Christ does. And John recognized himself as a lamp, in order not to be blown out by the wind of pride. A lamp can both be lit and be put out. The word of God cannot be put out; a lamp always can. Sermon 289.4.[27]

1:9 *The True Light Was Coming into the World*

The Light of Christ Freely Given. Chrysostom: If he "enlightens everyone that comes into the world," how is it that so many continue unenlightened? For not all have known the majesty of Christ. How then does he "enlighten everyone"? He enlightens all who live in him. But if some, willfully closing the eyes of their mind, would not receive the rays of that light, their darkness arises not from the nature of the light but from their own wickedness as they willfully deprive themselves of the gift. For the grace is shed forth upon all, turning its back on no one . . . but admitting all alike and inviting all equally. And those who are not willing to enjoy this gift ought in justice to impute their blindness to themselves. For if when the gate is opened to all and there is none to hinder, any who are willfully evil remain outside. They perish through no one else but their own wickedness. Homilies on the Gospel of John 8.1.[28]

The Son Enlightens Us with His Gifts.

[22]Mt 4:16; cf. Is 9:2. [23]FC 80:155-56*; SC 120:360-62. [24]Jn 1:10. [25]NPNF 2 4:440*. [26]Jn 5:35. [27]*WSA* 3 8:122*. [28]NPNF 1 14:29**.

Cyril of Alexandria: The rational portion of the creation, being enlightened, enlightens by sharing ideas from one mind as they are poured into another. Such enlightenment will rightly be called teaching rather than revelation. But the Word of God "enlightens everyone that comes into the world," not after the manner of teaching, as the angels, for example, or people, but rather, as God after the mode of creation, he engrafts in each of those that are called into being the seed of wisdom or of divine knowledge and implants a root of understanding. In this way, he renders the living creature rational, allowing it to participate in his own nature and sending into the mind, as it were, certain luminous vapors of the unutterable brightness in a way and mode that only he himself knows. For one may not, I think, say too much on these subjects. Therefore our forefather Adam too is seen to have attained wisdom not in time, as we, but right away from the first beginnings of his being he appears perfect in understanding, preserving in himself the illumination given of God to his nature as yet untroubled and pure and holding the dignity of his nature unadulterated.

The Son therefore *lights* after the manner of creation, as being himself *the very Light*. And by participation with the Light the creature shines forth and is therefore called and is *light*. The creature mounts up to what is above its nature by the kindness of him who glorified it and who crowns it with diverse honors. And so each one of those who have been honored may with good reason come forward and lift up prayers of thanksgiving. . . . For truly does the Lord commit acts of mercy, rendering those that are little and a mere nothing according to their own nature, great and worthy to be marveled at through his goodness toward them, even as he has, as God, willed to adorn us ungrudgingly with his own goods. And so he calls us gods and light. In fact, what good things are there that he does not call us? Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[29]

You Are Lamps, and the Cross Is the Lampstand. Augustine: But the apostles too, my brothers and sisters, are lamps for the day. Do not imagine that John alone is a lamp and that the apostles are not. The Lord said to them, "You are the light of the world."[30] And in case they should suppose they were light of the same sort as the light about which it is said, "That was the true light, which enlightens everyone coming into this world," he went on immediately to teach them this true light. After saying, "You are the light of the world," he added, "Nobody lights a lamp and puts it under the bushel." In calling you light, I meant you are a lamp; do not jump about for joy in your pride, in case its little flame gets blown out. I am not placing you under a bushel; but in order to shine, you shall be on the lampstand.

Listen to the lampstand; be lamps, and you shall have a lampstand. The cross of Christ is a great lampstand. Whoever wishes to shine must not be ashamed of this wooden lampstand. Sermon 289.6.[31]

[29]LF 43:86-87**. See also Augustine *Sermon* 229R (*WSA* 3 6:331). [30]Mt 5:14. [31]*WSA* 3 8:123. See also *Sermon* 182.5.

Christ's Reception by the World and by Believers John 1:10-13

Overview: Christ came into the world for our salvation (Bede). But it is also true that God had the incarnation in mind even before the fall with the purpose of uniting us to himself (Maximus the Confessor). Christ was in the world and yet transcends it. By "world" John means those too closely nailed to worldly things instead of to the cross of Christ (Chrysostom). The world does not know him because it has been blinded by the gods of this world (Cyril of Alexandria). The world is too busy enjoying the creature in place of the creator. When we love God, we are made into "gods," but when we love the world we give up God's name for that of the world (Augustine).

Not only Israel but the whole of humanity did not receive Jesus (Chrysostom), since all had lost their relationship with God and their knowledge of him through their fall into sin (Cyril of Alexandria). The only begotten Son of God did not want to remain alone, so he came to his own, wanting brothers and sisters who can share his inheritance with him (Augustine). Those who receive him receive the power to become children of God by embracing the Word and receiving adoption (Theodoret) through the Son of God (Basil). John does not say that "he made them sons of God" but that "he gave them the power to become sons of God," in order to show the zeal needed to keep the image impressed on them at baptism (Chrysostom). Those who are considered among the children of God should know this is not accomplished through their ability but through the grace of God (Augustine). To be called a son or daughter of God, as opposed to only a servant, is a great honor for the saints (John of Damascus). God wants to make you a god, not by nature but by adoption, so that you share his immortality. You are given the right to become a child of God, that is, the right to be cured from simply being human to being numbered among the sons and daughters of God (Augustine) through the power of God (Theodore). We were not born from God in the same way as his only begotten Son (Augustine), although the Son of God does elevate our nature, giving us a splendid robe with our divine adoption. He is a Son by nature; we are sons and daughters by grace (Cyril of Jerusalem), having received our second birth from God and the church. In other words, God considered you important enough to come and help you by taking on your flesh and making you immortal (Augustine).

1:10 *Christ Came into the World That He Made*

For the Sake of Our Salvation. Bede: The eternal Son of God who was in the world and through whom the world was made has come for a time into the world and for no other reason than our salvation, that is, that he might give us the understanding to perceive the true God. For no one was able to come to life without perception of the divinity; no one was able to perceive

God unless he himself taught us. Commentary on 1 John 5.20.[1]

The Purpose of the Incarnation Established Before the Fall. Maximus the Confessor: [The incarnation of the Logos] is the blessed end on account of which everything was created. This is the divine purpose, which was thought of before the beginning of creation and which we call an intended fulfillment. All creation exists on account of this fulfillment, and yet the fulfillment itself exists because of nothing that was created. Since God had this end in full view, he produced the natures of things. This is truly the fulfillment of providence and of planning. Through this there is a recapitulation to God of those created by him. This is the mystery circumscribing all ages, the awesome plan of God, superinfinite and infinitely preexisting the ages. The Messenger, who is in essence himself the Word of God, became man on account of this fulfillment. And it may be said that it was he himself who restored the manifest innermost depths of the goodness handed down by the Father; and he revealed the fulfillment in himself, by which creation has won the beginning of true existence. For on account of Christ, that is to say, the mystery concerning Christ, all time and that which is in time have found the beginning and the end of their existence in Christ. For before time there was secretly purposed a union of the ages, of the determined and the Indeterminate, of the measurable and the Immeasurable, of the finite and Infinity, of the creation and the Creator, of motion and rest—a union that was made manifest in Christ during these last times. Questions to Thalassium 60.[2]

The Word Is in the World Yet Transcends It. Chrysostom: "He was in the world," but not as though he was of equal duration with the world. Away with such an idea! This is why he adds, "And the world was made by him." In this way, John leads you up again to the eternal existence of the Only Begotten. For anyone who has heard that this universe is his work, even if he is not very smart or despises the glory of God, will certainly (whether he wants to or not) be forced to confess that the maker comes before his works. Homilies on the Gospel of John 8.1.[3]

The Meaning of "the World." Chrysostom: "And the world did not know him." By "the world" here, he means the multitude that is corrupt and closely attached to earthly things—the common, turbulent, foolish people. For the friends and admired[4] of God all knew him, even before his coming in the flesh. Concerning the patriarch, Christ himself speaks by name, "that your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad."[5] . . . "The world," he says, "did not know him," but those of whom the world was not worthy knew him. And having spoken of those who did not know him, he quickly informs us of the cause of their ignorance. For he does not absolutely say that no one knew him but that "the world knew him not." He is speaking about those persons who are, as it were, nailed to the world alone and who always worry about the things of the world. For this is how Christ referred to them, as when he says, "O Holy Father, the world has not known you."[6] The world then was ignorant, not only of him but also of his Father. For nothing so darkens the mind as to be closely attached to present things. Homilies on the Gospel of John 8.1-2.[7]

Why Are Any Ignorant of Christ? Cyril of Alexandria: Just as the light of the sun rises upon all, but the blind cannot see its light, we do not say that there is a deficiency with the sun's ray, but rather, it is because of the disease of the sight. . . . We ought to conceive of the Only Begotten in the same way that he is "very

[1]CS 82:227. [2]PG 90:621. Augustine too posits other advantages for the incarnation of Christ besides our salvation (see *On the Trinity* 13.17). [3]NPNF 1 14:29*. [4]Gk *thaumastoi*. [5]Jn 8:56. [6]See Jn 17:25. [7]NPNF 1 14:30-31*.

Light." But the god of this world, as Paul too says, has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, lest the light of the knowledge of God should be seen by them.[8] We say then that humankind was subjected to blindness in this way, not that it reached a total deprivation of light (for the God-given understanding is surely preserved in his nature), but that he was quenching [the desire to see God] with his foolish manner of life and that by turning aside to the worse he was wasting and melting away the measure of the grace. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[9]

The World's Ignorance of the Wisdom. Augustine: He is said to have come to us, not by traveling through space but by appearing to mortals in human flesh. He came, then, to that place where he already was, because he was in the world and the world was made by him. But, because of their eagerness to enjoy the creature in place of the Creator, people have been conformed to this world and have been fittingly called "the world." Consequently, they did not know wisdom, and, therefore, the Evangelist said, "the world knew him not." Christian Instruction 1.12.[10]

Two Worlds. Augustine: Which world was made through him that did not know him? I mean, it wasn't the world that was through him that did not know him. What is the world that was made through him? Heaven and earth. How can it be that the heavens did not know him, when during his passion the sun was darkened? How that the earth did not know him, seeing that it quaked as he hung there? But "the world did not know him," the world whose prince is the one of whom it is said, "Behold, the prince of this world is coming, and in me he can find nothing."[11] Bad people are called "the world," unbelievers are called "the world." They got the name from the thing they love. By loving God, we are made into gods. So by loving the world we are called "the world." Sermon 121.1.[12]

1:11 *His Own Did Not Receive Him*

All of Humankind Did Not Receive Him. Chrysostom: Speaking of the ancient times, [John] had said that "the world knew him not." Afterwards, he comes down in his narrative to the times of the proclamation [of the gospel] and says, "He came to his own, and his own did not receive him," now calling the Jews "his own," as his particular people, or perhaps even all humankind, as created by him. And as above, when perplexed at the folly of the many and ashamed of our common [fallen human] nature, [John] said that "the world was made by him," and having been made, did not recognize its Maker. So here again, being troubled beyond what he could bear[13] . . . he makes his accusation in an even more striking manner, saying, "His own did not receive him," even when "he came to them." Homilies on the Gospel of John 9.1.[14]

Neither Israel Nor the World Knew Its Illuminator. Cyril of Alexandria: The Evangelist pursues his plea that the world did not know its illuminator, that is, the Only Begotten, and from the worse sin of the children of Israel, he hurries to clench the charges against the Gentiles and shows the disease of ignorance alike and unbelief that lay upon the whole world. . . . For it was not surprising that the world did not know the Only Begotten, he says, seeing that it had left the understanding that befits humanity and was ignorant that it is and was made in honor, being compared with the beasts that perish, as the divine psalmist also said.[15] It also was not surprising that the very people who, above all, were supposed to belong to him rejected him when he was present in the flesh. They would not receive him when he came among them for a salvation that was offered to all, rewarding their faith with the kingdom of heaven. But observe how exact his language is about these things. For he accuses

[8]2 Cor 4:4. [9]LF 43:101**. [10]FC 2:35*. [11]Jn 14:30. [12]*WSA* 3 4:234. [13]Gk *dusanaschetōn* [14]NPNF 1 14:32**. [15]Ps 49:20 (48:21 LXX).

the world of having no idea of the one who enlightens it, elaborating for it a pardon so to speak just on this account and preparing beforehand reasonable causes for the grace given to it. But of those of Israel who were considered among those especially belonging to him, he says they "received him not." For it would not have been true to say "knew him not," when the older law had preached about him and the prophets who came after led them by the hand to the apprehension of the truth. . . .

For the world, or the Gentiles, having lost their relation . . . with God through their downfall into evil, also lost the knowledge of him who enlightens them. But the others, who were rich in knowledge through the law and called to a governance pleasing to God, were at length voluntarily falling away from it, not receiving the Word of God who was already known to them and who came among them as to his own. For the whole world is God's own, in regard to its creation, and its very existence comes from him and through him. But Israel will more rightly be called his own[16] and will gain the glory both because of the election of the holy patriarchs and because he [i.e., Israel] was named the beginning and the firstborn of the children of God. For "Israel is my son, my firstborn,"[17] says God somewhere to Moses. . . . But when [Christ] was not received, he transfers the grace to the Gentiles. And the world, which knew him not at the beginning, is enlightened through repentance and faith, whereas Israel returns to the darkness it came from. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[18]

1:12 *Adopted Children of God*

The Only Son of God Does Not Want to Remain Alone. Augustine: John adds, "As many as received him." What did he afford to them? Great benevolence! Great mercy! He was born the only Son of God and was unwilling to remain alone. Many, when they do not have sons, in advanced age adopt a son. In this way they obtain by an exercise of will what nature has denied to them. This is what people do. But if anyone has an only son, that person rejoices the more in him, because he alone will possess everything, and he will not have anyone to divide with him the inheritance, so that he should be poorer. This is not how God does things. That same only Son whom he had begotten, and by whom he created all things, is the one he sent into this world so that he might not be alone but might have adopted brothers and sisters. For we were not born of God in the manner in which the Only Begotten was born of him, but we were adopted by his grace. For he, the Only Begotten, came to loose the sins in which we were entangled and whose burden hindered our adoption. Those whom he wished to make his brothers and sisters are the ones he himself freed and made joint heirs. . . . He was not afraid of having joint heirs, because his inheritance does not become less if its possessors are many. Those very persons, since he is the possessor, become his inheritance, and he in turn becomes their inheritance.[19] . . . Let us possess him, and let him possess us. Let him possess us as Lord; let us possess him as salvation, let us possess him as light. What then did he give to them who received him? "To them he gave power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," that they may cling to the wood and cross the sea. Tractates on the Gospel of John 2.13.[20]

The Gift of Adoption. Theodoret of Cyr: "I have said, 'You are gods and all sons of the most high, but as human beings you die.'"[21] He says this to those who did not accept the gift of adoption[22] but who dishonor the taking of flesh through the pure birth of the Word of God, deprive humanity of the ascent to God and show ingratitude to God's Word who was made flesh

[16]Gk *tō tēs idiotētos apokeklēsetai logō*. [17]Ex 4:22. [18]LF 43:102-3**. [19]Ps 2:7, 8; 16:5 (15:5 LXX, Vg). [20]NPNF 1 7:17**. See also Hilary of Poitiers *On the Trinity* 11.15. [21]Ps 82:6-7 (81:6-7 LXX). [22]See Rom 8:15, Gal 4:5, Eph 1:5.

for them. For this is why the Word became a human being and the Son of God became a Son of man: that the human being, by embracing the Word and receiving adoption, might become a son of God. Dialogue 1.20.[23]

Divine Adoption Through the Son of God. Basil the Great: When the soul has been clothed with the Son of God, it becomes worthy of the final and perfect stage and is baptized in the name of the Father himself of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to the testimony of John, gave the power to be made the sons of God. Concerning Baptism 1.2.[24]

The Baptismal Seal of Sonship. Chrysostom: Why, then, did he not say that "he made them sons of God," instead of "he gave them power to become sons of God"? He did so to show how much zeal is needed to keep the image of sonship that was impressed on us at baptism and to keep it all the way through without spot or soiling. At the same time, he also wanted to show that no one will be able to take this power from us, unless we first deprive ourselves of it. . . . For even in these mystical blessings,[25] it is, on the one hand, God's part, to give the grace, on the other, a person's to supply faith. What follows needs much perseverance. In order to preserve our purity, it is not sufficient for us merely to have been baptized and to have believed; we must display a life worthy of it if we want to continually enjoy this brightness. This then is God's work in us. Homilies on the Gospel of John 10.2-3.[26]

By Grace We are Made God's Offspring. Augustine: When any person . . . is . . . considered to be among the children of God, such an achievement must not be considered to have been accomplished by their ability alone. This ability they have received through the grace of God, because they did not possess it in a nature that had become corrupted and depraved. On Nature and Grace 64.77.[27]

The Honor Bestowed on the Saints. John of Damascus: The saints must be honored as friends of Christ and children and heirs of God. . . . "Therefore they are no longer servants, but children: and if children, heirs also, heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ."[28] Orthodox Faith 4.15.[29]

God Wants to Make You a "god" by Adoption. Augustine: I mean, you are not being told not to be a human, in the sense that you are to be a beast, but rather that you are to be among those to whom "he gave the right to become children of God." God, you see, wants to make you a god; not by nature, of course, like the one whom he begot; but by his gift and by adoption.[30] For just as he through being humbled[31] came to share your mortality; so through lifting you up he brings you to share his immortality. Sermon 166.4.[32]

Faith First, Then Sight. Augustine: Now turn your attention to the doctor of our salvation who has come to us, our Lord Jesus Christ. He found us blind of heart, he promised us a light that "eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it come up into the heart of [a] man."[33] This is what the angels see, what they enjoy. I mean, just as healthy people see what the blind do not see, so angels see what people do not see. Why doesn't [a] man see it? Because he still wants to be "man." So let man [humankind] himself start getting cured, so that from being "man" he may be numbered among the sons of God, because "he gave them the right to become children of God," that is, he gave them the right to be cured, to have the mistiness of heart wiped away, because "blessed are the pure in heart, because it is they who shall see God."[34] Sermon 360b.15.[35]

[23]FC 106:70-71. [24]FC 9:380. [25]Of baptism. [26]NPNF 1 14:36-37**. [27]FC 86:83*. [28]Gal 4:7; Rom 8:17. [29]FC 37:367*. [30]See Gal 4:5-6. [31]See Phil 2:8. [32]*WSA* 3 5:209*. [33]1 Cor 2:9. [34]Mt 5:8. [35]*WSA* 3 11:375*.

Regenerated Through Divine Power. Theodore of Mopsuestia: For those, he says, who received him, their reception was not useless. He gave them something great and excellent; certainly, insofar as it is possible, he made them equal in honor by giving them the gift of sonship. They take advantage of that grace not by being reborn in the body according to the natural order of generation. Rather, they are given birth by divine power through a certain similarity and relationship with him. Commentary on John 1.1.12.[36]

1:13 *Born of God*

The Son of God Elevates Our Nature. Cyril of Alexandria: They who, he says, have been called by faith in Christ to sonship with God put off the littleness of their own nature, adorned with the grace of him who honors them as with a splendid robe—they mount up to a dignity above nature. For no longer are they called children of flesh, but rather offspring of God by adoption.

But note how extremely careful the blessed Evangelist is in his words. For since he was going to say that those who believe are begotten of God, he needs to exercise additional caution. He needs to do this in case anyone should suppose that they are in truth born of the essence of God the Father and arrive at an exact likeness with the Only Begotten. Or they might think that "from the womb before the Daystar I begat you"[37] is something less appropriately said of the Son too. If they went down this path, the Son too, at length, would be brought down to the nature of creatures, even though he is said to be begotten of God. This is why he needs this additional caution. For when he had said that power was given to them to become sons of God from him who is by nature Son—and thus here for the first time introduces what is by adoption and grace—he avoids danger by adding afterwards they were begotten of God. He does this so that he might show the greatness of the grace that was conferred on them, gathering as it were into a kinship of nature[38] that which was alien from God the Father and raising up its connection to the nobility of its Lord through his own heartwarming love for it. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[39]

Jesus Is Son of God by Nature. Cyril of Jerusalem: The Father, being very God, begot the Son like himself, very God; not as teachers beget disciples, not as Paul says to some, "I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel."[40] For in this case [Paul is speaking about] he who was not a son by nature becoming a son by discipleship. But in the former case [of Jesus], he was a son by nature, a true son—not as you, who are to be illuminated, are now becoming sons of God: for you also become sons but [do so] by adoption of grace, [not by nature]. Catechetical Lectures 11.9.[41]

The First and Second Birth. Augustine: And how do they become children of God? "Who are born not of blood, nor of the will of a man nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." Pay close attention: these here have been born of God, having received power to become children of God. They have been born of God, not of blood, such as is the case with the first birth, the case with the birth in misery coming from miserable parents. But those who have been born of God, what was it that they were first born of? From a mixing of blood, from the blood of male and female, from a mingling of the flesh of male and female, that is what they were born of. But now, how is it they are born of God? The first birth was from male and female; the second birth is from God and the church. Sermon 121.4.[42]

God Considered You Important Enough to Come and Help You. Augustine: These, then, "were born not of the will of the flesh nor of

[36]CSCO 4 3:32. [37]Ps 110:3 (109:3 LXX). [38]Gk *oikeiotēta physikēn*. [39]LF 43:105-6**. See also Cyril's *De Sancta Trinitate,* dialog 7. [40]1 Cor 4:15. [41]NPNF 2 7:66*. [42]*WSA* 3 4:236.

the will of man, but of God." But that human beings might be born of God, God was first born of them. For Christ is God, and Christ was born of men. It was only a mother, indeed, that he sought on earth because he already had a father in heaven. He by whom we were to be created was born of God, and he by whom we were to be re-created was born of a woman. Do not be amazed then that you are made a son or daughter by grace, do not be amazed that you are born of God according to his Word. The Word himself first chose to be born of man so that you might be born of God unto salvation. You can say to yourself, "God had a reason for wanting to be born of man, because he considered me as someone important, someone that he might make immortal, someone like me who was born as a mortal." When, therefore, he said, "born of God," in case we should, as it were, be filled with amazement and trembling at such grace—at grace so great as to exceed belief that people are born of God—as if assuring you, he says, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Why, then, do you marvel that people are born of God? Consider God himself born of men. Tractates on the Gospel of John 2.15.[43]

[43]NPNF 1 7:18**

THE WORD TABERNACLES AMONG US JOHN 1:14

Overview: God's own Son was made the Son of man so that he might make the sons of men the sons of God (Chrysostom). This, however, did not involve a change in his substance as God as though he were changed into a human being (Hilary). Scripture does not explain how this generation into the flesh occurred (Jerome), but it does make clear that there are two natures, human and divine, united in one person, with no change to either nature (Cyril of Alexandria). Just as the words in our mind become embodied in the voice, so the Word was embodied in flesh, manifesting himself to the world (Augustine). The Word not only chose to reveal himself by taking on flesh but also realized that death was the only way to undo the corruption of our flesh; so he took upon himself a body capable of infirmity and death (Athanasius), clothing himself with a healthy nature in order to restore the original health of human nature lost through Adam (Ephrem). He assumed all of our humanity except sin (Augustine) in order to kill the death that lurks there (Basil). He restored our flesh, that is, our human nature, so that it is no longer subject to death (Cyril of Alexandria). "He was made man so that we might be made god" (Athanasius), increasing what is ours while not diminishing what is his (Gregory the Great). He then joins his own flesh to the nature of the eternal Godhead in the sacrament that communicates that flesh to us (Augustine), consecrating himself in us that we may receive his glory, which is full of grace and truth (Maximus the Confessor). He took upon himself the form of a servant (Ephrem), impoverishing himself for our sakes (Augustine).

He is Emmanuel, God with us (Ambrose), who made a tabernacle of the flesh in which he dwelt (Theodore) and enriched our nature by joining himself with it (Cyril of Alexandria). When the text says, "We beheld his glory," one can readily see that the Gospels are peppered with the signs of his glory, such as the star that appeared to the magi, the angels, the voice of the Father, the descent of the Spirit and other divine signs (Ammonius), including the transfiguration that provided a glimpse of the glory, shielded by his body, that would otherwise have blinded them (Ephrem). But they also beheld the glory of the cross that Christ endured for our salvation (Chrysostom). By becoming flesh, the Word healed our flesh, which had been blinded by sin and death but now can see his glory (Augustine). Begotten of the Father's love (Prudentius), he who was begotten of the substance of the Father eternally and ineffably (Cyril of Jerusalem) is identical with the Son of man who began to be at a particular time from the Virgin (Augustine). Seeing his works and miracles testifies to the glory he has with the Father (Theodore).

1:14a *And the Word Became Flesh*

The Most High Brings the Lowly to His Level. Chrysostom: Having declared that they who received him were "born of God" and had become "sons of God," he adds the cause and reason of this unspeakable honor. It is that "the Word became flesh," that the Master took on him the form of a servant. For he became Son of man, who was God's own Son, in order that he might make the sons of men [humankind] to be children of God. For when the high associates with the low, it does not touch its own honor at all. Instead, it raises up the other from its excessive lowness. So it was with the Lord. By no means did he diminish his own nature by his condescension, but he raised us, who had always sat in disgrace and darkness, to unspeakable glory. Likewise, it may be that a king, conversing with interest and kindness with a poor person of lower social status, does not shame himself at all but makes the other illustrious and observed by all. Now, if, in the case of the extrinsic dignity of people, association with the humbler person in no way injures the more honorable one, then much less can it do so in the case of that simple and blessed essence that has nothing extrinsic or subject to growth or decay but has all good things immovable and fixed forever. So, when you hear that "the Word became flesh," do not be disturbed or cast down, for that essence did not change to flesh—it is impiety to imagine this—but continuing what it is, it took the form of a servant on it. Homilies on the Gospel of John 11.1.[1]

Flesh Becomes Like the Word. Hilary of Poitiers: [The dignity of the Godhead is preserved] so that in the fact that the Word was made flesh, the Word, in becoming flesh, has not lost through being flesh what constituted the Word, nor has it become transformed into flesh, so as to cease to be the Word. But the Word was made flesh in order that the flesh might begin to be what the Word is. . . . God, knowing no change when made flesh, lost nothing of the prerogatives of his substance. On the Councils 48.[2]

Who Can Describe His Generation into Flesh? Jerome: The Word was made flesh, but how he was made flesh, we do not know. The doctrine from God, I have; the science of it, I do not have. I know that the Word was made flesh; how it was done, I do not know. . . . Isaiah even says, "Who can describe his generation?"[3] What had Isaiah meant then by saying, "The virgin shall be with child and bear a son"?[4] He is telling us what has happened, but when he says, "Who can describe his generation?" he is revealing to us

[1]NPNF 1 14:38-39*. [2]NPNF 2 9:17*. This was an almost universal emphasis of the patristic Christological tradition. See also *On the Trinity* 2.25; Ambrose *Letter* 27; Apollinaris *Fragments on John* 2; Ammonius *Fragments on John* 23; Theodoret *Eranistes* (FC 106:34, 38) and other commentaries *loc. cit.* [3]See Is 53:8 LXX; see also Jerome's *Against John of Jerusalem* 10 (PL 23:380). [4]Is 7:14.

the fact that he has been born, but how he has been born, we do not know. Homily 87, On John 1:1-14.[5]

Two Natures in One Person. Cyril of Alexandria: We do not say that the nature of the Word was changed and became flesh or that it was converted into a whole man consisting of soul and body; but rather that the Word having personally united to himself flesh animated by a rational soul did in an ineffable and inconceivable manner become man and was called the Son of man, not merely according to the will, or being pleased to be so called, neither on account of taking to himself a person, but because the two natures being brought together in a true union, there is of both one Christ and one Son. For the difference of the natures is not taken away by the union, but rather the divinity and the humanity make perfect for us the one Lord Jesus Christ by their ineffable and inexpressible union. Letter 4, To Nestorius.[6]

The Word Manifested Itself as Flesh. Augustine: For just as our word in some way becomes a bodily sound by assuming that in which it may be manifested to the senses of people, so the Word of God was made flesh by assuming that in which he might also be manifested to the senses of people. And just as our word becomes a sound and is not changed into a sound, so the Word of God indeed becomes flesh, but far be it from us that is should be changed into flesh. For by assuming it, not by being consumed in it, this word of ours becomes a sound, and that Word became flesh. On the Trinity 15.11.20.[7]

The King Dwells in Our Fleshly House. Athanasius: For the Word perceived that death was the only way that the corruption of people could be undone. However, it was impossible for the Word to suffer death, being immortal and Son of the Father. Therefore, he takes to himself a body capable of death, so that such a body, by partaking of the Word who is above all, might be worthy to die in the stead of all, and might, because of the Word that had come to dwell in it, remain incorruptible. In this way, the corruption of all might be checked by the grace of the resurrection. By offering to death the body he himself had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from any stain, he got rid of death for all his peers by offering an equivalent. For the Word of God, which by his very nature is over everything, by offering his own temple and bodily vessel for the life of all, satisfied the debt by his death. And thus he, the incorruptible Son of God, joined with all by a similar nature, naturally clothed all with incorruption by the promise of the resurrection. For the actual corruption in death no longer has a hold on humanity because of the Word which, by his one body, has come to dwell among them. It is similar to when a great king has entered into some large city and taken up residence in one of the houses there. That city is thus deemed worthy of high honor. No enemy or bandit any longer descends on it and subdues it. On the contrary, it finds itself entitled to total protection because the king has taken up his residence in a single house there: so, too, has it been with the Monarch of all. For now that he has come to our realm and taken up residence in one body among his peers, from this time forward the whole conspiracy of the enemy against humankind is checked, and the corruption of death, which before had prevailed against them, is done away with. For the human race would have gone to ruin if the Lord and Savior of all, the Son of God, had not come among us to meet the end of death. On the Incarnation 9.1-4.[8]

The Flesh United to God Experiences Victory. Ephrem the Syrian: Why did our Lord clothe himself with our flesh? So that this flesh might experience victory and that [human-

[5]FC 57:217*. [6]NPNF 2 14:197-98. The Fathers also emphasized it was "true flesh" Christ took on. See Augustine *Sermon* 362.13. [7]FC 45:477. [8]NPNF 2 4:40-41**. See also Ambrose *On the Sacrament of the Incarnation of Our Lord* 6.60; Augustine *Sermon* 23A.3; *Sermon* 293.5; *Sermon* 341A.1.

ity] might know and understand the gifts [of God]. For if God had been victorious without the flesh, what praise could one render him? Second, so that [our Lord] might show that, at the beginning, he experienced no jealousy toward him [who had wanted] to become God. For he in whom [our Lord] was abased is greater than he in whom he was dwelling when [Adam] was great and glorious.[9] This is why [it is written], "I have said, 'You shall be gods.'"[10] Thus, the Word came and clothed itself with flesh, so that what cannot be grasped[11] might be grasped through that which can be grasped,[12] and that, through what cannot be grasped, the flesh would raise itself up against those who grasp it.[13] For it was fitting that our Lord be the haven of all good things to whom [people] might be gathered together, the end of all mysteries toward whom they would hasten from everywhere, and the treasure of all the parables so that everyone, lifted up [as though] on wings, might rest in him alone.

[See] the wisdom [of God], that in the fall of him who fell, there fell with him the One who was destined to raise him up.[14] Because the body of Adam was in existence before his [evil] passions, [our Lord] did not assume the passions with which [Adam subsequently] clothed himself, since they were a kind of additional weakness to a healthy nature. Our Lord clothed himself therefore with a healthy nature that had lost its health, so that the original health of this nature might thereby be restored. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 1.1.[15]

God Assumed the Whole of Humanity, Except for Sin. Augustine: It is not right to say that any part was lacking in that human nature he put on, except that it was a human nature altogether free from any bond of sin. Enchiridion 10.34.[16]

Godhead in the Flesh Seeks to Kill Death That Lurks There. Basil the Great: How can the Godhead be in the flesh? In the same way as fire can be in iron: not by moving from place to place but by the one imparting to the other its own properties. Fire does not speed toward iron, but without itself undergoing any change it causes the iron to share in its own natural attributes. The fire is not diminished, and yet it completely fills whatever shares in its nature. So is it also with God the Word. He did not relinquish his own nature, and yet "he dwelt among us." He did not undergo any change, and yet "the Word became flesh." Earth received him from heaven, yet heaven was not deserted by him who holds the universe in being. . . .

Let us strive to comprehend the mystery. The reason God is in the flesh is to kill the death that lurks there. As diseases are cured by medicines assimilated by the body, and as darkness in a house is dispelled by the coming of light, so death, which held sway over human nature, is done away with by the coming of God. And as ice formed on water covers its surface as long as night and darkness last but melts under the warmth of the sun, so death reigned until the coming of Christ; but when the grace of God our Savior appeared and the Sun of justice rose, death was swallowed up in victory, unable to bear the presence of true life. How great is God's goodness, how deep his love for us! Homily on Christ's Ancestry 2.6.[17]

Humanity Is No Longer Subject to Death. Cyril of Alexandria: John has now entered openly upon the declaration of the incarnation. For he plainly sets forth that the Only

[9]As McCarthy notes, "The reference here is to the First Adam before the fall. The second Adam is superior to the first. . . . The eschatological Paradise to which the Christian is restored through baptism [a key theme in early Syrian Christianity] is far more glorious than the original Paradise, for Christ, the Second Adam, has definitively reversed the effects of the disobedience of the First Adam. Adam's pre-fallen state was neither mortal nor immortal, and, although he enjoyed a certain glory then, it was radically inferior to that of the Second Adam (cf. *Commentary on Genesis* and *Hymns on Paradise*)." See also *Hymns on the Nativity* 1.93-99. [10]Ps 82:6. [11]Divinity. [12]Humanity [13]Possibly a reference to demonic forces or powers of Satan that wage war against the flesh. [14]Ephrem uses the same verb, "to fall," to refer to the fall of the first Adam and the abasement through the incarnation of the second Adam. [15]*ECTD* 39-40. [16]FC 2:400*. [17]*JFC* 24-25; PG 31:1460-61.

Begotten became and is called son of man; for his saying that "the Word was made flesh" signifies this and nothing else. For it is as though he had said more starkly "The Word was made man." Speaking this way, he introduces nothing strange or unusual since divine Scripture often calls the whole creature by the name "flesh" by itself.[18] . . .

Humanity, then, is a creature who is rational but also composite. It consists of a soul that exists as well as this perishable and earthly flesh. And when it was made by God and was brought into being, not having of its own nature incorruption and immortality (for these things pertain essentially to God alone), it was sealed with the spirit of life by participation with the Divinity. In doing so, it gained the good that transcends nature. For he "breathed," it says, "into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."[19] But when he was being punished for his transgressions, then with justice he heard, "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return."[20] He was denuded of the grace. The "breath of life," that is, the Spirit of him who says, "I am the life," departed from the earthly body, and the creature fell into death through the flesh alone, the soul being kept in immortality, since to the flesh alone it was said. "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return." It was necessary, therefore, that what in us was especially endangered should more urgently be restored, and by intertwining again with what is Life by nature, [our flesh] should be recalled to immortality. It was necessary that the sentence, "Dust you are, and to dust you will return" should be overturned, the fallen body being united ineffably to the Word that enlivens all things. For it was necessary that, becoming his flesh, it should partake of the immortality that is from him. For it would be absurd if fire should have the power of infusing into wood the perceptible quality of its inherent power and of all but transforming into itself anything that participates in it, and yet that we should not fully hold that the Word of God which is over all, would work into our flesh his own good, that is, life.

This, in my opinion, is probably the reason that the holy Evangelist, indicating the creature specifically by the part that was affected, says that "the Word of God became flesh," so that we might see at once the wound and the medicine; [at once] the sick and the Physician; what had fallen into death and him who raised it to life; what was overcome by corruption and him who chased away the corruption, what was trapped in death and him who is superior to death; what was bereft of life and the Giver of life. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[21]

He Was Made Man So We Might Be Made God. Athanasius: He was made man that we might be made god.[22] He manifested himself by a body that we might receive a conception of the unseen Father. He endured the hubris of humanity that we might inherit incorruptibility. For on the one hand, he himself was in no way injured, being impassible and incorruptible and very Word and God; but on the other hand, in his own impassibility he maintained and preserved those human beings who were suffering and for whose sakes he endured all this. On the Incarnation 54.3.[23]

He Increased What Is Ours. Gregory the Great: But we say that the Word was made flesh not by losing what he was but by taking what he was not. For in the mystery of his incarnation the Only Begotten of the Father increased what was

[18]See Joel 2:28. [19]Gen 2:7 LXX. [20]Gen 3:19. [21]LF 43:108-9**. [22]Gk *theopoiēthōmen*. See 2 Pet 1:4; Ps 82:6. See also *Discourse Against the Arians* 2.70 (NPNF 2 4:386), where further references in Athanasius are listed, as well as his *Letter* 60.4; 61.2. Athanasius does not mean that we become God or somehow receive all of God's attributes, although he does mention here the attribute of incorruptibility. Rather, he draws out the implication that we will be children of God not in name only, but truly, by adoption, because Christ has joined his nature to ours, which, as Hilary notes below, is communicated to us in the sacrament. This happens in us "by grace" in relation to Christ, who is Son and God "by nature." The patristic writers did not break down the wall of ontological separation between creature and Creator as though implying that we share the same ontological existence as God as, for instance, the Mormons would teach. See Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* OECS (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1-2. [23]NPNF 2 4:65*.

ours but diminished not what was his. Letter 67.[24]

The Bread and Wine. Augustine: What you can see here, dearly beloved, on the table of the Lord, is bread and wine; but this bread and wine, when the word is applied to it, becomes the body and blood of the Word. That Lord, you see, who "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" was so compassionate that he did not despise what he had created in his own image; and therefore "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," as you know. Because, yes, the very Word took to himself a man, that is, the soul and flesh of a man, and became man while remaining God. For that reason, because he also suffered for us, he also presented us in this sacrament with his body and blood, and this is what he made even us ourselves into as well. Sermon 229.1.[25]

In Christ We Have the Fullness of Grace. Maximus the Confessor: This grace we receive from [Christ's] fullness always in proportion to our progress. Therefore, the one who keeps sacred the whole meaning of the Word of God's becoming incarnate for our sake will acquire the glory full of grace and truth of the one who for our sake glorifies and consecrates himself in us by his coming. "When he appears we shall be like him."[26] Chapters on Knowledge 1.76.[27]

Our Humanity Sealed with His Divinity. Ephrem the Syrian: On this day on which the Lord of all came among servants, let the lords also bow down to their servants lovingly.

On this day when the rich One was made poor for our sake, let the rich man also make the poor man a sharer at his table.

On this day a gift came out to us without our asking for it; let us then give alms to those who cry out and beg from us. . . .

This Lord of natures today was transformed contrary to his nature; it is not too difficult for us also to overthrow our evil will.

Bound is the body by its nature for it cannot grow larger or smaller; but powerful is the will for it may grow to all sizes.

Today the Deity imprinted itself on humanity, so that humanity might also be cut into the seal of Deity. Hymns on the Nativity 1.93-99.[28]

The Riches of Jesus and His Poverty. Augustine: What could be richer than he through whom all things were made? A rich person can possess gold, but he cannot create it. These riches of his having thus been declared, now observe his poverty: "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us." It is by this poverty of his that we have been enriched, because by his blood, which flowed from his flesh, the flesh the Word became in order to dwell among us, the sacking of our sins was torn up. Through that blood we have cast off the rags of iniquity, in order to clothe ourselves in the robes of immortality. Sermon 36.3.[29]

1:14b *And Lived Among Us*

The Word Is Emmanuel. Ambrose: It is written, they say, "The Word was made flesh." It is written. I do not deny it. But consider what follows, for there follows: "And dwelt among us," that is, that word that took on flesh, this Word dwelt among us, that is, dwelt in human flesh, and so he is called Emmanuel, that is, "God with us."[30] So this statement, "The Word was made flesh," stands for that which took place. He became man even as he said in Joel: "I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh," for the future pouring out of spiritual grace is promised not for irrational flesh but for humanity. On the Sacrament of the Incarnation of Our Lord 6.59.[31]

The Word Tabernacled in Our Nature. Theodore of Mopsuestia: In order to explain

[24]NPNF 2 13:83*. [25]*WSA* 3 6:265. See also Hilary of Poitiers *On the Trinity* 3.5. [26]1 Jn 3:2. [27]*MCSW* 164. [28]ESH 74. [29]*WSA* 3 2:175. [30]Mt 1:23. [31]FC 44:241-42*. See also Bede *Homily* 1.5 *On the Gospels.*

the word *was,* the Evangelist added *kai eskēnōsen en hēmin,* and "tabernacled in us," that is, in this sense he became flesh: he lived in our nature. Evidently the words stand for "lived among us," as also the apostle said about us human beings, "We who are still in this tabernacle[32] groan,"[33] where he called our body a tabernacle. He also writes elsewhere, "We know that if the earthly tabernacle we live in is destroyed."[34] It is well known that in Scripture usually the whole person is indicated by "flesh," as in, "To you all flesh shall come."[35] Commentary on John 1.1.14.[36]

Enriching Our Common Nature. Cyril of Alexandria: The assertion that the Word dwelt in us is a useful one because it also reveals to us a very deep mystery. For we were all in Christ. The common element of humanity is summed up in his person, which is also why he was called the last Adam: he enriched our common nature with everything conducive to joy and glory just as the first Adam impoverished it with everything bringing corruption and gloom. This is precisely why the Word dwelt in all of us by dwelling in a single human being, so that through that one being who was "designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness"[37] the whole of humanity might be raised up to his status so that the verse, "I said, you are gods and all of you sons of the Most High"[38] might through applying to one of us come to apply to us all. Therefore, that which is enslaved is liberated in a real sense and ascends to a mystical union with him who put on the form of a servant, while "in us" it is liberated by an imitation of the union with the One through our kinship according to the flesh. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[39]

1:14c *We Beheld the Glory*

The Glory of the Transfiguration. Ephrem the Syrian: In his mercy he [our Lord] used our body, so that we might endure the sight of him and hear the sound of his voice, and so that we not suffer what the foremost disciples suffered on the mountain, when through his body his glory shone upon them. Sleep fell upon them, and they were rendered speechless and were astounded by his glory.[40] . . . And this was so that we might learn why he was seen without glory, and why he came in a body. If indeed the apostles and foremost of the disciples saw his deity when it was not completely revealed, what would surely have happened to us if he had appeared to us openly, in the incorporeal glory of his deity? Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 14.5.[41]

The Divine Signs That Showed His Glory. Ammonius: How did we behold his glory? We beheld it through the star of the magi, the angels, the shepherds, Anna, Simeon, Gabriel, the miraculous birth of the Virgin, the voice of the Father who witnessed to him, the Spirit descending upon him and many other divine signs and healings. Fragments on John 25.[42]

The Glory of the Only Begotten Found in His Sufferings. Chrysostom: For we admire him not only because of the miracles but also because of the sufferings. We admire the fact that he was nailed upon the cross, that he was scourged, that he was beaten, that he was spit on, that he received blows on the cheek from those to whom he had done good. For even of those very things that seem to be shameful, it is proper to repeat the same expression, since he himself called that action[43] "glory." For what then took place was [proof] not only of kindness and love but also of unspeakable power. At that time death was abolished, the curse was loosed, devils were shamed and led in triumph and made a show of, and the handwriting of our sins was nailed to the cross. And then, since these wonders were happening invisibly, others took place visibly, showing that he

[32]Syriac *armwu*. [33]2 Cor 5:4. [34]2 Cor 5:4. [35]Ps 65:2 (64:3 LXX). [36]CSCO 4 3:33-34. See also Theodoret *Eranistes* (FC 106:254). [37]Rom 1:4. [38]Ps 82:6 (81:6 LXX). [39]*COA* 106-7. [40]See Lk 9:32. [41]CB709:118-20. [42]*JKGK* 203. [43]His crucifixion.

was truly the only begotten Son of God, the Lord of all creation. For while that blessed body hung on the tree, the sun turned away its rays, the whole earth was troubled and became dark, the graves were opened, the ground quaked, and an innumerable multitude of the dead leaped forth and went into the city. And while the stones of his tomb were fastened on the vault and the seals still on them, the dead arose, the crucified, the nail-pierced one, and having filled his eleven disciples with his mighty power, he sent them to people throughout all the world, to be the common healers of all their kind,[44] to correct their way of living, to spread through every part of the earth the knowledge of their heavenly doctrines, to break down the tyranny of devils, to teach those great and ineffable blessings, to bring to us the glad tidings of the soul's immortality and the eternal life of the body, and rewards that are beyond conception and shall never have an end. Homilies on the Gospel of John 12.3.[45]

Blinded by Flesh, Healed by Flesh. Augustine: His glory no one could see unless he was healed by the lowliness of his flesh. Why could we not see? Concentrate, my beloved people, and see what I am saying. Dust, so to speak, had forcibly entered humanity's eye; earth had entered it, had injured the eye, and it could not see the light. That injured eye is anointed; it was injured by earth, and earth is put there that it may be healed.[46] For all salves and medicines are nothing but [compounds] of the earth. You have been blinded by dust, you are healed by dust; thus the flesh has blinded you, flesh heals you. For the soul had become carnal by assenting to carnal passions; from that the eye of the heart had been blinded. "The Word was made flesh." That physician made a salve for you. And because he came in such a way that by his flesh he might extinguish the faults of the flesh and by his death he might kill death, it was therefore effected in you that, because "the Word was made flesh," you could say, "And we saw his glory." Tractates on the Gospel of John 2.16.2.[47]

1:14d *The Only Begotten of the Father*

Of the Father's Love Begotten. Prudentius:

Of the Father's love begotten before the beginning of the world,
Called Alpha and Omega, himself both source and end
Of all that is, has been, and will exist in times to come.
He commanded and they were created, he spoke and they were made,
Earth, heavens, the depths of the sea—the triple structure of the universe—
And all that inhabits them beneath the lofty orbs of sun and moon.
He put on mortal body's form and limbs vulnerable to death,
To prevent the destruction of the race sprung from the first creature
Whom a deadly law had plunged deep into hell.
O what a blessed birth was then, when a virgin in labor,
Having conceived by the Holy Spirit, brought forth our salvation,
And the child who is the world's redeemer revealed his sacred face.
Let the heights of heaven sing, all you angels, sing,
Let all the powers everywhere sing in praise of God,
Let no tongue be silent, let every voice ring in harmony.
Look how the one who was foretold by seers in ages past
And pledged in the prophets' reliable writings,
Shines forth, he who was promised long ago: let all things praise him.

Hymns for Every Day 9.10-27.[48]

[44]Or "of their whole nature." [45]NPNF 1 14:42*. [46]See Jn 9:6. [47]FC 78:73-74. [48]ECLP 82-83. In White, these hymns are known by their Latin name Cathemerinon.

Begotten of the Father Eternally. Cyril of Jerusalem: The Father begot the Son, not as a human mind begets a word. For the mind is substantially existent in us, but the word when spoken is dispersed into the air and comes to an end. But we know Christ to have been begotten not as a word pronounced but as a Word substantially existing and living; not spoken by the lips and dispersed but begotten of the Father eternally and ineffably, in substance . . . sitting at God's right hand; the Word understanding the Father's will and creating all things at his bidding: the Word, which came down and went up; for the word of utterance when spoken does not come down, nor does it go up; the Word speaking and saying, "I speak of what I have seen with my Father,"[49] the Word possessed of power and reigning over all things, for "all things have been delivered to him by my Father."[50] Catechetical Lectures 11.10.[51]

Flesh and Word United in One Person. Augustine: That "the Word became flesh" does not mean that the Word passed into flesh by perishing, but that flesh was attached to the Word to prevent flesh itself from perishing; with the result that just as a person is soul and flesh, so Christ would be God and man. The same one who is God is man, the same one who is man is God; not by a compounding of nature but by unity of person. In a word, the one who as Son of God is coeternal with his begetter and always from the Father is identical with the Son of man who began to be at a particular time from the Virgin. And thus humanity was indeed added to the divinity of the Son; and yet this did not result in a quaternity or foursome of persons, but the Trinity or threesome remains. Sermon 186.1.[52]

1:14e *Full of Grace and Truth*

Christ's Works Testify to His Glory, Grace and Truth. Theodore of Mopsuestia: We did not agree to believe in him lightheartedly, [John says,] but accepted him as a true, only begotten Son because of those things that we saw. And the things we saw demonstrated the greatness of the one who appeared—they could belong to no one else except the Only Begotten who possesses perfect identity with the Father. And it is also true that the works that were made through him were full of true grace. He called grace *truth* in comparison with that of the Jews, in order to accuse the unbelievers, and he reveals his intention with the words that follow.

He indicates grace with the name of truth, that is, the true grace, because Christ took on the ancient transgressions and gave salvation through the remission of sins. In addition he destroyed death, which reigned because of sin, and gave us a sound hope in the resurrection through our adoption as sons. He gave us hope not only in the word, like the Jews, but also regenerated in us the hope of resurrection by the works [of Christ] through the power of the Spirit. The symbol of resurrection is baptism, which confirms that death itself will never destroy us. For this reason he prepared for us the delights of the heavenly kingdom if we preserve pure in our actions the honor of the adoptive relationship given to us through baptism. Commentary on John 1.1.14.[53]

[49]Jn 8:38. [50]Mt 11:27; cf. Jn 5:22. [51]NPNF 2 7:66-67*. [52]*WSA* 3 6:24. [53]CSCO 4 3:34-35; Cyril's interpretation is similar in *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 1.9. Theodore goes on to address those who make too much of the particle "as," as if John were comparing Jesus with an only son, rather than extolling his praises.

THE GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE THROUGH THE INCARNATE CHRIST JOHN 1:15-18

Overview: John the Evangelist enlists John the Baptist in support of his testimony concerning Christ (Cyril of Alexandria) as one who would be credible among the Jews (Chrysostom). Jesus may be ranked behind the Baptist concerning his birth in time, as well as in comparison with John's notoriety at the time and the comparable misapprehension of Jesus' divinity, but Jesus' superiority will become evident soon enough (Cyril of Alexandria). John did not let his own notoriety unduly affect him, however, considering himself unworthy even to untie Jesus' sandals and thus humbling his own position in order to elevate the Word's (Augustine).

Origen believed that John the Baptist continues his testimony from John 1:15 through the following verses because the Baptist, along with the rest of the prophets, received his prophetic grace from the one who "ranks before me, because he was before me" (Origen). Chrysostom and others, however, see these words as the Evangelist's, applied also to all those who follow, who together receive the grace of God in its fullness (Chrysostom). Grace springs forth from the divine nature of Christ like a fountain, ennobling our nature without diminishing his nature (Cyril, Chrysostom). This grace comes to us when we receive faith as a gift (the first grace mentioned) and when we receive the result of faith, which is eternal life (the second grace mentioned) (Augustine). Instead of the grace of the law, we receive the grace of the gospel of participation in the divine nature by means of the Spirit (Theodore).

John the Evangelist next moves from comparing Jesus with John the Baptist, to Jesus and Moses, the most respected figure of the Old Testament as the giver of the law (Chrysostom). Jesus' superiority to Moses is similar to the superiority of the gospel of grace and forgiveness over the sacrificial system of the law (Ambrose). The law too was a grace that was given, but what Christ brings is all the greater because it perfects in us what the law was unable to perfect (Cyril of Alexandria). The law only threatens; the grace of the gospel heals. The law dealt in shadows and figures; truth has come through Jesus Christ (Jerome).

In declaring that no one has seen God, John is not contradicting the writer of Hebrews (Eusebius), since in the many sightings of God in the Old Testament they did not see the essence of God but rather a glory adapted to their own nature, which made God capable of being seen by them (Pseudo-Dionysius, Theodoret). In this sense, Moses saw Christ, not his essence but only the outward appearance (Augustine). God is most clearly seen in his Son (Irenaeus), who is the interpreter of the Godhead (Ambrose) because he is a Son by nature, not by adoption (Augustine, Hilary). Only the Son could have seen the Father (Cyril of Alexandria) because he is the only begotten God who is of the same nature as the Father (Hilary). He is in the Father's bosom, which is like a womb from which

the Son is begotten (Ambrose) without mother (Augustine). John shows us the closest possible union of Father and Son, as the Father's bosom indicates the essence of the Godhead in which the Son resides (Chrysostom). One might also consider it as the hidden and secret place of God known only to the Son (Ambrose). The Son has come from the bosom of the Father to declare him; this is not the first time such a declaration occurred (Origen), but it is the clearest and most complete revelation and given not only to the Jews but to the entire world (Chrysostom).

1:15a *John the Baptist Was a Witness*

The Evangelist's Witness Supported by the Baptist's. Cyril of Alexandria: I [John the Evangelist] then, says he, bear witness (for I have beheld what I said), and the Baptist likewise bears witness. This is a most weighty pair of Spirit-clad and notable men, foster brothers in truth who do not know how to lie. But see how forcefully he made his declaration. For he not only says that John "bears witness of him" but profitably adds "and cried," taking his proof from the words "the voice of one crying in the wilderness."[1] And he does this exceedingly well too. For it was possible that some of his opponents might say, When did the Baptist witness to the Only Begotten, or to whom did he impart things about him? He cried then, he says, that is, he does not speak them in a corner, nor does he bear witness gently and in secret. In fact, you (although not you alone) may hear him crying louder and more clearly than a trumpet since his speech is to everyone everywhere. Most glorious is the herald, remarkable the voice, great and not unheard of is the forerunner. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[2]

Credibility of John's Testimony with the Jews. Chrysostom: The Evangelist makes frequent mention of John and his testimony. This is all the wiser because all the Jews held the man in great admiration. (Even Josephus imputes the war to his death and shows that, because of him, what once was the mother city is now no city at all. [He] continues the words of his encomium at great length.)[3] John, wanting to shame the Jews, continually reminds them of the testimony of the forerunner. Homilies on the Gospel of John 13.1.[4]

1:15b *Ranking of the Baptist and Jesus*

Jesus' Greatness Comes from His Essence, Surpassing John. Cyril of Alexandria: The obvious and received meaning is this: As far as his birth according to the flesh is concerned, the Baptist preceded the Savior, and Emmanuel clearly followed and came *after* by six whole months, as the blessed Luke related. Some suppose this is what John meant, in other words, that he who comes after me, in point of age, is preferred before me. . . . But this carries us too far afield. . . .

Rather, the Baptist advances as it were from an image drawn from our affairs to the exposition of subtler thoughts. For one who leads is always considered to be more glorious than those who follow, and things that succeed yield the palm to those that precede them. . . . As for example when one has surpassed the skill of his teacher and, leaving that behind, attains to something superior. I think that he who is surpassed may correctly say of his overachieving student, "He that comes after me has become before me." Transferring then the force of our idea to our Savior Christ and the holy Baptist, you will rightly understand it. . . . The Baptist was admired by all. He made many disciples. A great multitude of those who came for baptism was always surrounding him. Christ, albeit superior, was unknown, and they did not know that he was

[1]Is 40:3. [2]LF 43:113**. [3]Chrysostom is overstating the case here since there is no such passage in Josephus. He may, however, be referring to Aretas's attack and destruction of Herod's army, which, he says, some of the Jews thought was "divine vengeance for his treatment of John, surnamed the Baptist." Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* A 18.106. [4]NPNF 1 14:44**.

truly God. Since, then, he was unknown while the Baptist was admired, he seemed I suppose to fall short of him. He came a little *after* him who had still the higher position in honor and glory from people. But "he that comes after has become before," being shown to be greater and superior to John. For the One was at length revealed by his works to be God, the other not surpassing the measure of human nature, is found at last to have *become after.* Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[5]

We Have Received of His Fullness. Augustine: John admitted he was a lamp lit from Christ, and that is why he took refuge at his feet, to avoid being blown out by the wind of pride if he flew too high. He was in fact so great that some people thought he might be the Christ, and if he had not been his own witness that he was not, the mistake would have persisted, and people would have gone on thinking he was. What a humble man. The honor was offered him by the people, and he spurned it. People were getting the wrong ideas about his greatness, and he put himself in his place. He did not want to be magnified by the words of people, because he had grasped the Word of God. Sermon 66.1.[6]

1:16 *Receiving of His Fullness, Grace for Grace*

John the Baptist Continues His Testimony. Origen: This [continues] the recorded testimony of John the Baptist about Christ which begins with the statement "This was he who said, 'He who comes after me'" and ends at the words "The only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." . . .

It is very forced to suppose that the word of the Baptist is suddenly and unseasonably, as it were, broken off by the word of the disciple. The sequence of the text is clear to everyone who knows how just to listen for a while to the context of what is being said: "This was he who said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'"

But by the statement "Because of his fullness we all have received," the Baptist is teaching how Jesus ranks before him by being before him (since he was the firstborn of creation).[7] It is for this reason that he says, "He ranks before me, because he was before me." And I think he existed before me and is more honored with the Father, because both I and the prophets before me have received the more divine and greater prophetic grace from his fullness for the grace we received from him in relation to our free choice.

In addition "he ranks because he was before me," since, when we have received of his fullness, we have also understood that the law has been given "through Moses," not "by Moses," but that grace and truth have not only been given through Jesus Christ but also have come into existence through him, since his God and Father has both given the law through Moses and has produced through Jesus Christ the grace and the truth that have come to people." Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.13, 34-36.[8]

These Are John's Words and Ours. Chrysostom: John [the Evangelist] . . . joins his own testimony to that of the Baptist, for the expression "of his fullness have we all received" belongs not to the forerunner but to the disciple; and its meaning is something like this: Do not think, he says, that we, who accompanied him for so long and ate of his food and sat at table with him—that we bear witness to him because we are favored. . . . All we—the Twelve, the three hundred, the three thousand, the five thousand, the many myriads of Jews, all the fullness of the faithful who then were and now are and hereafter shall be—"have received of his fullness." Homilies on the Gospel of John 14.1.[9]

---

[5]LF 43:113-15**. See also Augustine *Sermon* 380.5 (*WSA* 3 10:365). [6]*WSA* 3 3:210*. [7]Col 1:15. [8]FC 80:171,178*; SC 157:138, 154-56. Cyril makes a similar point that the original surpasses everything that has an origin; see *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 1.9. [9]NPNF 1 14:48**.

Divine Grace Springs from the Son's Nature. Cyril of Alexandria: For it is a truly excellent pronouncement of the Baptist when he appears to me to say of the Only Begotten, "For he was before me," that is, far surpassing and superior. For all we too, who have been enrolled in the choir of the saints, enjoy the riches of his proper good, and the nature of humanity is ennobled with his rather than its own excellences, when it is found to have nothing that is noble. For from the fullness of the Son, as from a perennial fountain, the gift of the divine graces springing forth comes to each soul that is found worthy to receive it. But if the Son supplies as from his own natural fullness and the creature is supplied—how will he not be conceived of as having glory, not similar to the rest, but the kind of glory that would pertain to the only begotten of God? He then is shown to have the superiority over all as the fruit of his own nature, and to have the preeminence as the dignity of his Father's being. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[10]

He Possesses Grace by Nature, We by Participation. Chrysostom: He does not possess, he says, the gift by participation[11] but is himself the very fountain and root of all good, the very life and light and truth, not retaining within himself the riches of his good things but overflowing with them into all others. And after the overflowing, he still remains full and undiminished, in spite of supplying others. On the contrary, he remains perfect as always, streaming forth as much as ever and imparting to others a share of these blessings. What I possess, on the other hand, is by participation (for I received it from another) and is only a small portion of the whole. Homilies on the Gospel of John 14.1.[12]

Grace Rewards Grace. Augustine: What then is "grace for grace"? By faith we first win God's favor; and we who were not worthy to have our sins forgiven, from the very fact that, though unworthy, we received so great a gift, it is called grace. . . .

But having acquired this grace of faith, you will be justified by faith. "For the just person lives by faith."[13] And you will first win God's favor from living by faith. When you have won God's favor from living by faith, you will receive as a reward immortality and eternal life. And that is grace. Now for what merit do you receive eternal life? For grace. For if faith is grace, and if eternal life is, as it were, a reward for faith, God, indeed, seems to pay back eternal life as if it were owed—owed to whom? Owed to the person of faith because he won it by faith—always recalling that faith comes only by grace, and eternal life is a grace for grace. Tractates on the Gospel of John 3.9.1-2.[14]

The Grace in Jesus' Nature. Theodore of Mopsuestia: "From his fullness," he says, "we have all received," that is, the grace of the Spirit, which is given to us as a gift, we received from his abundance. About his human nature he says that every grace is in it; but at the same time this shows the dignity of the nature that is in him. Through the union with the divine Word, by means of the Spirit, he was made participant in the true relationship. We have taken a part from his spiritual grace, and through it we are made participant together with him in this adoptive affiliation, even though we are very far away from that dignity. And he fortunately added, "grace for grace," indicating with the name of grace the law as well. He says, instead of that grace [of the law] this grace is given. Commentary on John 1.1.16.[15]

1:17 *Grace and Truth Are from Christ*

Moses As the Point of Reference. Chrysostom: See how gently, by a single word and little by little, both John the Baptist and John the disciple lead their hearers up to the highest knowledge, having first exercised them in hum-

[10]LF 43:116**. [11]Gk *methektēn dōrean*. [12]NPNF 1 14:47**. [13]See Rom 1:17, citing Hab 2:4. [14]FC 78:83*. [15]CSCO 4 3:37-38.

bler things? John the Baptist, comparing with himself [Jesus], who is incomparably superior to all, thus afterwards shows Jesus' superiority by saying, "he comes before me," and then adding the words "he was before me." Meanwhile, John the Evangelist has done much more than John the Baptist, though too little for the worthiness of the Only Begotten. For the Evangelist makes the comparison, not with John but with one reverenced by the Jews more than John. He compares him with Moses. "For the law," he says, "was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Homilies on the Gospel of John 14.3.[16]

Sacrifice Under the Law; the Gospel Is Mercy. Ambrose: I pardon willingly, [says the Lord,] I quickly forgive: "I will have mercy rather than sacrifice,"[17] because by sacrifice the just is rendered more acceptable, by mercy the sinner is redeemed. "I come not to call the righteous but sinners." Sacrifice was under the law; in the gospel is mercy. "The law was given by Moses, grace by me." Concerning Repentance 1.12.54.[18]

Superiority of Grace to Law. Cyril of Alexandria: What then is the distinction between the law and the grace that comes through the Savior? . . . The law condemned the world (for God through [the law] "concluded all under sin,"[19] as Paul says) and showed us subject to punishment. But the Savior rather sets the world free, for he came "not to judge the world but to save the world."[20] And the law too used to give grace to people, calling them to the knowledge of God and drawing away from the worship of idols those who had been led astray. It also pointed out evil and taught good, if not perfectly, yet in the manner of a teacher and usefully. But the truth and grace that are through the Only Begotten do not introduce to us the good that is in types or to limited things that are only profitable as in shadow. Rather, in glorious and most pure ordinances, it leads us by the hand to an ever more perfect knowledge of the faith. And the law used to give the "spirit of bondage to fear,"[21] but Christ gives the spirit of adoption to liberty. The law likewise brings in the circumcision in the flesh, which is nothing (for "circumcision is nothing"[22]). But our Lord Jesus Christ is the giver of circumcision "in the spirit and heart."[23] The law baptizes the defiled with mere water; the Savior baptizes "with the Holy Spirit and with fire."[24] The law brings in the tabernacle for a "figure of the true";[25]the Savior bears up to heaven itself and brings to the truer "tabernacle, which the Lord set up and not man [humankind]."[26] There are plenty of other proofs besides, but we must respect our limits.

But we will say this for profit and need. The blessed Paul in few words solved the question, saying of the law and of the Savior's grace, "For if there was splendor in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation of righteousness must far exceed it in splendor."[27] For he says that the commandment by Moses is "the ministration of condemnation," but the grace through the Savior he calls "the ministration of righteousness," which he says surpasses in glory. And so he most perfectly examines the nature of things like a child with the Spirit. Since then the law, which condemns, "was given by Moses," the grace that justifies came by the Only Begotten. If this is true, he says, how can it be otherwise than that [Jesus] is superior in glory through whom the better things were ordained? Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.9.[28]

The Law Threatened, the Gospel Heals. Augustine: Death was the punishment of sins. The gift of mercy was in the Lord, not the punishment of sin. . . . And so the chain of sin shall not hold you forever, because the temporal death of your Lord defeated your eternal death. The same is grace, my brothers, the same is truth,

[16]NPNF 1 14:49**. [17]Hos 6:6. [18]NPNF 2 10:338. [19]Gal 3:22. [20]Jn 12:47. [21]Rom 8:15. [22]1 Cor 7:19. [23]Rom 2:29. [24]Mt 3:11. [25]Heb 9:24. [26]Job 8:2. [27]2 Cor 3:9. [28]LF 43:118-19**. Theodore's argument is very similar.

because it is not only promised but also made known.

This grace was not in the Old Testament, because the law threatened but did not bring aid; commanded but did not heal; made known but did not take away our feebleness. Instead it prepared the way for that physician who was to come with grace and truth. He is the kind of physician who, when about to come to anyone to cure him, might first send his servant so that he might find the sick person bound. He was not healthy; he did not wish to be made healthy and just in case he should be made healthy, he boasted that he was so. The law was sent; it bound him. He finds himself accused, so now he cries out against the bondage. The Lord comes, cures with somewhat bitter and sharp medicines. For he says to the sick, "Bear." He says, "Endure." He says, "Do not love the world, have patience, let the fire of continence cure you, let your wounds endure the sword of persecutions." Were you greatly terrified although bound? He, free and unbound, drank what he gave to you. He first suffered that he might console you, saying, as it were, that which you fear to suffer for yourself, I first suffer for you. This is grace, and great grace. Who can praise it in a worthy manner? Tractates on the Gospel of John 3.13-14.[29]

New Grace and Truth. Jerome: For [in place of] the grace of the law, which has passed away, we have received the abiding grace of the gospel, and, instead of the shadows and figures of the ancient covenant, truth has come by Jesus Christ. Letter 75.[30]

1:18a *The Unseen God*

God Was Seen in Many Ways. Eusebius of Caesarea: From the text "No one has seen God at any time," perhaps it might be thought that the above quotation contradicts the Savior's words, as implying that the invisible is visible. But if they are understood, like our former quotations, of the Word of God, who was seen by the fathers "in many and various ways,"[31] no contradiction is involved. Proof of the Gospel 5.18.3.[32]

The Vision of God. Pseudo-Dionysius: Scripture has clearly shown that "no one ever has seen" or ever will see the being of God in all its hiddenness. Of course God has appeared to certain pious persons in ways that were in keeping with his divinity. He has come in certain sacred visions fashioned to suit the beholders. This kind of vision, that is to say, where the formless God is represented in forms, is rightly described by theological discourse as theophany. The recipients of such visions are lifted up to the divine. They are granted divine enlightenment and are somehow initiated in the divine things themselves. Celestial Hierarchy 4.3.[33]

He Was Made Manifest in Flesh. Theodoret of Cyr: So when we use religious arguments and rely on divine denials that explicitly state that "no one has ever seen God," we are saying that they have seen, not the divine nature but certain visions adapted to their capability.[34] . . .

Let us think about the angels in the same way, then, when we hear, "They see the face of your Father daily."[35] For they do not see the divine substance, which is infinite, unlimited, incomprehensible and embraces all things, but rather a certain glory that is adapted to their own nature. . . .

After becoming human, however, he is also seen by angels, according to the divine apostle, not in a likeness of glory, but using the true and living cloak of flesh as though it were a veil. For he says, "Who was made manifest in flesh, was vindicated in spirit, was seen by angels."[36] Dialogue 1.[37]

Christ Appeared to Moses, but Not in His Essence. Augustine: In case anyone might say, "And did not grace and truth come

[29]NPNF 1 7:22-23**. [30]FC 12:357*. [31]Heb 1:1. [32]*POG* 1:262*. [33]*PDCW* 157. [34]Theodore makes a similar point in his commentary. [35]Mt 18:10. [36]1 Tim 3:16. [37]FC 106:44.

through Moses who saw God?" immediately he adds, "No one has seen God at any time." And how did God become known to Moses? He became known because the Lord revealed himself to his servant. What Lord? It was the same Christ who sent the law beforehand by his servant so that he might himself come with grace and truth. . . . And he who knew the Father, being in the secret place of the Father,[38] declared him. "For no one has seen God at any time." He then came and narrated whatever he saw. What did Moses see? Moses saw a cloud, an angel, a fire. All that is of the creature bore the type of its Lord, but they did not manifest the presence of the Lord himself. For you have it plainly stated in the law, "And Moses spoke with the Lord face to face, as a friend with his friend."[39] . . . An angel then spoke with Moses, my brothers, bearing the type of the Lord; and all those things that were done by the angel promised that future grace and truth. Those who examine the law know this well. . . .

But know also this, that all those things that were seen in bodily form were not that substance of God. For we saw those things with the eyes of the flesh—how is the substance of God seen? Interrogate the Gospel: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."[40] There have been those who, deceived by the vanity of their hearts, have said: The Father is invisible, but the Son is visible. What do they mean by visible? If they mean on account of his flesh, because he took flesh, the matter is clear. For of those who saw the flesh of Christ, some believed, some crucified. And those who believed doubted when he was crucified. Unless they had touched the flesh after the resurrection, their faith would not have even been recalled. If, then, the Son was visible because of his flesh, we grant this, and it is the catholic faith. But if before he took flesh, that is, if before he became incarnate they say they saw the Son, they are greatly deluded and making a horrible mistake. For those visible and bodily appearances took place through the creature, in which a type might be exhibited. But there is no way that the substance itself was shown and made known. Listen, beloved, to this easy proof. The wisdom of God cannot be beheld by the eyes. Brothers, if Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God,[41] if Christ is the Word of God, and if the word of man [humankind] is not seen with the eyes, can the Word of God be seen in this way? Tractates on the Gospel of John 4.17-18.[42]

The Only Begotten God Declares the Invisible Father. Irenaeus: Clearly the Father is indeed invisible, of whom also the Lord said, "No one has seen God at any time." But his Word, as he himself willed it and for the benefit of those who beheld it, did show the Father's brightness and explained his purposes—as also the Lord said, "The only begotten God,[43] which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared [him]." And, he himself also interprets the Word of the Father as being rich and great. He appeared not only in one figure or in one character to those who saw him, but according to whatever purpose or effect he was aiming for in his plan of salvation.[44] Against Heresies 4.20.11.[45]

Christ Is the Interpreter of the Godhead. Ambrose: For Christ is the interpreter of the Godhead, because "no one has at any time seen God, except the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him." Joseph 14.84.[46]

1:18b *The Only Begotten*[47]

He Is the Only Son; We Are Many Sons. Augustine: He is Son by nature, we by grace; he is the "only Son," we are many, because he is

[38]Augustine calls the "bosom" of the Father his secret place, which only the Son knows. [39]Ex 33:11. [40]Mt 5:8. [41]1 Cor 1:24. [42]NPNF 1 7:23-24**. [43]Irenaeus also calls him "the only begotten Son" in *Against Heresies* 3.11.6. See also Marius Victorinus *Against Arius* 1.B1.2.3.e.53. [44]He cites Dan 3:26; 7:4, 13-14 and numerous texts from Revelation. [45]ANF 1:491**. See also Hilary of Poitiers *On the Trinity* 4.42. [46]FC 65:237. [47]The fathers were divided, even in their own writings, on whether the text should read "only begotten God" or "only begotten Son." See the critical apparatus in the UBS Greek New Testament.

born, we are adopted.[48] So while God had a one and only Son, "he did not spare," as the apostle says, "his very own one and only Son, but gave him up for us all."[49] What greater medicine could the human race demand or hope for, than that the only Son should be sent, not to live with us, but to die? Sermon 348a.3.[50]

The Only Begotten Son. Hilary of Poitiers: It seemed to [John] that the name of Son did not set forth with sufficient distinctness his true divinity, unless he gave an external support to the peculiar majesty of Christ by indicating the difference between him and all others. And so he not only calls him the Son but adds the further designation of the Only Begotten. In this way he cuts away the last prop from under this imaginary adoption. For the fact that he is Only Begotten is proof positive of his right to the name of Son. On the Trinity 6.39.[51]

The Only One Who Could See God. Cyril of Alexandria: "No one has seen God at any time;" for the "Only Begotten" himself being God, "which is in the bosom of" God "the Father," made this declaration to us, saying most clearly to the hierophant[52] Moses, "No one shall see my face and live."[53] He also said to his own disciples, "Not that any one has seen the Father, except he who is of God, he has seen the Father."[54] For the Father is visible to the Son, who alone is Son by nature, and only in this way may one understand[55] that the divine nature divinely sees and is seen. It is not [visible] to anything else that exists. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.10.[56]

The Only Begotten God Is Not a Different God. Hilary of Poitiers: In the nature of God, God is one, yet in such a way that the Son also is God, because in him there is not a different nature. And since he is God of God, both must be God, and since there is no difference of kind between them, there is no distinction in their essence. The idea of having a number of titular gods is rejected because there is no diversity in the quality of the divine nature. Therefore he is anathema who says there are many gods, and he is anathema who denies that the Son is God. It is fully shown that the fact that each has one and the same name arises from the real character of the similar substance in each. . . . In confessing the unborn God the Father, and the only begotten God the Son, with no dissimilarity of essence between them, each is called God. And yet, God must be believed and be declared to be one. So by the diligent and watchful care of the bishops the creed guards the similarity of the nature begotten and the nature begetting, confirming it by the application of one name. On the Councils 36.[57]

1:18c *The Bosom of the Father*

The Son Proceeds from the Father's Bosom As from the Womb. Ambrose: "The bosom of the Father," then, is to be understood in a spiritual sense, as a kind of innermost dwelling of the Father's love and of his nature in which the Son always dwells. Even so, the Father's womb is the spiritual womb of an inner sanctuary from which the Son has proceeded just as from a generative womb. To be sure, we read in different versions, now that it was the Father's womb, again that it was his heart with which he uttered the Word, and again that it was his mouth from which justice proceeded and from which wisdom came forth, as Wisdom says, "From the mouth of the Most High I came forth."[58] Thus, since the One is not limited and all things declare the One, the blessing refers rather to the spiritual mystery of generation from the Father than to some part of the body. But just as we interpret it to mean *that* generation from the Father, likewise let us interpret it to mean the generation from Mary unto the completion of faith, when the mother's womb is blessed, that virginal womb of Mary that

[48]See Gal 4:5. [49]Rom 8:32. [50]*WSA* 3 11:311. [51]NPNF 2 9:113*. [52]Lit., "the holy revealer." [53]Ex 33:20. [54]Jn 6:46. [55]Gk *eikasai*. [56]LF 43:122**. [57]NPNF 2 9:14*. [58]Sir 24:3.

brought forth for us the Lord Jesus. . . . Here was a twofold nature in Christ, the divine and the fleshly, the former from the Father, the latter from a virgin. On the Patriarchs 11.51.[59]

Born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Augustine: We believe in him that he was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Each birth of his, you see, must be considered wonderful, both that of his divinity and that of his humanity. The first is from the Father without mother, the second from mother without father; the first apart from all time, the second at "the acceptable time";[60] the first eternal, the second at the right moment; the first without a body "in the bosom of the Father," the second with a body, which did not violate the virginity of his mother; the first without either sex, the second without a man's embrace. Sermon 214.6.[61]

The Essence in Which Only Christ Resides. Chrysostom: Observe, therefore, with what fullness the Evangelist speaks. Having said that "no man has seen God at any time," he does not go on to say "that the Son who has seen has declared him," but adds something beyond "seeing" by the words "who is in the bosom of the Father." "To dwell in the bosom" is far more than "to see." For he who merely "sees" does not have an exact knowledge of the object in every way. He who "dwells in the bosom," however, can be ignorant of nothing. . . . The Evangelist mentions "the bosom" in order to show to us by that one word that the affinity and nearness of the essence is great, that the knowledge is in no way different and that the power is equal. The Father would not have in his bosom one of another essence, nor would he have dared, had he been one among many servants, to live in the bosom of his Lord. For this belongs only to a true Son, to one who has much confidence toward his Father and who is in nothing inferior to him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 15.2.[62]

The Fountain of Wisdom at the Heart of the Father. Ambrose: The Word of God is in the bosom of his Father, that is, in the hidden and secret places of God. The fountain of wisdom is there, and from it one may drink the everlasting drink of eternal life in place of death. Flight from the World 2.10.[63]

1:18d *Has Declared Him*

This Is Not the First Declaration. Origen: For "[he who is] in the bosom of the Father" did not now for the first time make the declarations that he made to the apostles, as though there had been no one fit to receive them previously, since, indeed, in his existence before Abraham was, he teaches us that Abraham rejoiced that he might see his day and was glad.[64] . . . The prophets too have received their gift from the fullness of Christ, and they have received the second grace for the former, for they too, being led by the Spirit, arrived at the vision of truth after they were initiated in types. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.15.[65]

Christ's Is the Clearest and Most Complete Declaration. Chrysostom: What has he declared? That "no one has seen God at any time"? That "God is one"? But this all the other prophets testify, and Moses continually exclaims, "The Lord your God is one Lord";[66] and Isaiah, "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."[67] What more then have we learned from "the Son who is in the bosom of the Father"? What more from "the Only Begotten"? In the first place, these very words were uttered by his working. In the next place, we have received a teaching that is far clearer, and we learned that "God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."[68] And again, that it is impossible to see

[59]FC 65:269. See also his *On the Sacrament of the Incarnation of Our Lord* 2.13; 5.42. [60]2 Cor 6:2. [61]*WSA* 3 6:153. [62]NPNF 1 14:52-53*. See also Cyril *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 1.9, who focuses on the sameness of essence. [63]FC 65:287. See also Augustine *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 4.17. [64]Cf. Jn 8:58, 56. [65]FC 80:172; SC 157:140-42. [66]Deut 6:4. [67]Is 43:10. [68]Jn 4:24.

God; "that no one knows" him "except the Son"[69]; that he is the Father of the true and Only Begotten; and all other things that are told us of him. But the word "has declared" shows the plainer and clearer teaching that he gave and established not to the Jews only but to all the world. Not even all the Jews listened to the prophets, but to the only begotten Son of God all the world yielded and obeyed. So the "declaration" in this place shows the greater clearness of his teaching, and therefore he is called "Word" and "Angel of great Counsel."[70] Homilies on the Gospel of John 15.3.[71]

[69]Mt 11:27. [70]Is 9:6 lxx. [71]NPNF 1 14:53*.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY JOHN 1:19-28

Overview: The Jews from Jerusalem send priests and Levites to one of their own, John the Baptist, earnestly (unlike the Pharisees) seeking to know if he is the Christ. John first seeks to remove their false ideas about the Messiah's identity (Origen). The Baptist could have used the opportunity for deception to exalt himself (Augustine). Instead, John humbly confessed he was not the Christ, correcting their false perception that he was worthier than Jesus (Chrysostom, Augustine).

They ask if he is Elijah, who was second in importance after the Messiah, with reference to the hope of Israel's deliverance, thinking that John was the same Elijah who had been taken up into heaven and now had returned (Origen). John answers no, although his role in Christ's first advent does prefigure Elijah's role in the second advent (Augustine). One might think that he is contradicting Jesus' later words when Jesus says that Elijah has already come, but this is not the case because our Lord was referring to the Elijah who would precede his second coming (Gregory the Great). One wonders why there is all this questioning of John's identity. Could they have been ignorant of the circumstances of his birth, especially since his father, Zechariah, was a high priest? They ask a third time if he is *the* prophet prophesied in Deuteronomy (Origen).

John replies that he was not, even though he was a prophet and much more (Gregory the Great). Israel's expectation was based on the hope that a prophet would return in the flesh and would be similar to Moses in his mediation between God and humanity (Origen).

The Jewish leaders insist on an answer (Chrysostom), so John, the voice in the wilderness, speaks to them of the preexistent Word that shapes and informs his voice, that is, the Christ who was among them. Christ is the Word; John is the voice (Augustine). The voice indicates to the lost (Origen) that Christ is a better way than that of Moses (Cyril of Alexandria). John was preparing that way to come into his hearers' hearts by preaching the true faith and the resultant good works (Gregory the Great).

Not only the priests and Levites but the Pharisees too send someone to inquire of John, although their motives are not as pure as those of the priests and Levites (Origen). Instead of trying to discover who John was, they are more concerned with trying to trip him up (Chrysostom). But John sees through their schemes and focuses instead on the fact that his baptism was merely an introductory baptism of repentance that still awaited the more perfect baptism of Christ (Cyril of Alexandria). His baptism is inferior because it is only a baptism of repentance and not of the Spirit (Gregory the Great, Origen).

In answer to their objection concerning his baptism, John announces that there is one in their midst they do not know, by whose authority he baptizes (Apollinaris). John speaks in humility concerning his own baptism and of his unworthiness to untie the sandals of Jesus (Augustine). The untying of the sandals recalls the imagery in the book of Ruth of the kinsman redeemer removing his sandals in preparation to receive his bride, something that John was unwilling to do because he was not the bridegroom. Or, the sandal strap is the bond of a mystery concerning the Lord's incarnation (Gregory the Great). But when Christ does remove his sandals, he leaves his footprints on our souls (Ambrose).

John announces Christ not in some quiet backwater but very publicly in Bethany, or rather Bethabara (Chrysostom), whose name, which means "preparation," is indicative of John's type of baptism (Origen).

1:19 *Priests and Levites Come to See John*

The Priests Come to One from the Priestly Line. Origen: Now, therefore, let us consider John's second testimony. Jews from Jerusalem send priests and Levites to inquire who John might be, since they are kinsmen of the Baptist who happens to be from the priestly race.[1] . . . Note that two embassies come to the Baptist. One consists of "priests and Levites" sent from Jerusalem by the Jews "to ask him, 'Who are you?'" The other comes from the Pharisees, who send also because they are in doubt about the answer that had been given to the priests and Levites. Observe carefully, therefore, how in accordance with the character of priests and Levites, things are said with gentleness and curiosity. . . . There is nothing self-willed or rash in the inquiry of these men; everything is appropriate to scrupulous servants of God. . . .

These elect ambassadors were sent from Jerusalem, the place chosen above all the earth . . . and they interrogate John with the greatest respect. Nothing like this, however, has been recorded to have been done by the Jews concerning Christ. It is John who does to Christ what the Jews do to him, when he [respectfully] inquires through his own disciples, "Are you he that is to come, or should we expect another?"[2] Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.43, 50-51, 54.[3]

1:20 *John Confesses He Is Not the Christ*

John First Removes Their False Suspicions. Origen: Someone may, perhaps, reasonably raise the question why in the world, when the priests and Levites inquire of John, not if he

[1]See Lk 1:5. [2]Mt 11:3. [3]FC 80:180, 182-83**; SC 157:162, 166-68.

is the Christ but "Who are you?" the Baptist does not answer, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." . . . It is likely that John saw from the question the reverence of the priests and Levites. Their question suggested their secret suspicion that he who baptizes might be the Christ, but they were cautious about asserting this more boldly that they might not seem rash. This is why he declares with good reason that he is not the Christ, to remove all their false suspicion about him first, then, in this way, to present the truth. . . .

We should also add that the people were disturbed that the time of the Christ's sojourn might already be imminent from the time slightly preceding the birth of Jesus up to the manifestation of his preaching. In all probability the scribes and lawyers were already expecting the one awaited (deriving his time from the Scriptures). This is why Theodas[4] had sprung up who had gathered no small crowd by claiming to be the Christ, I think. And after him, Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxation,[5] had done something similar. Since therefore Christ's sojourn is rather heatedly expected and discussed, it is with good reason that the Jews send priests and Levites from Jerusalem to John, intending with the question, "Who are you," to see if he will admit to being the Christ. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.56-57, 60-61.[6]

An Opportunity for Deception? Augustine: But the Jews say, "Are you the Christ?" If he had not been a valley to be filled in but a mountain to be humbled, he would have found here an opportunity for deception. They, you see, would like to hear from him what they believed. I mean they were so impressed by his grace that they would undoubtedly believe whatever he said. There you are, he had found an opportunity of deceiving the human race; if he said "I am the Christ," they would believe him. If he started bragging with a name that belonged to another, he would lose his own proper merit. If he started bragging as though he were the Christ, wouldn't he have this answer to give himself? "Why are you pushing yourself forward? 'All flesh is grass, and its glory like the flowers in the grass; the grass has withered, the flowers fallen.' Understand what abides forever—'but the Word of the Lord abides forever.'"[7] Sermon 289.4.[8]

Sympathy Toward John As the More Deserving. Chrysostom: [The Jews] were influenced by a kind of human sympathy for John [the Baptist], whom they were reluctant to see made subordinate to Christ because of the many marks of greatness about him. [For example], there was in the first place his illustrious descent, since he was the son of a chief priest.[9] There was also his hard training and his contempt for the world.[10] . . . In Christ, however, the contrary was apparent. He was of humble birth, for which they reproach him by asking, "Is not this the carpenter's son?"[11] . . . And the country that he was supposed to have come from had such a bad reputation that even Nathanael said, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"[12] He also had an ordinary way of living and clothes like everyone else wore. . . . When John then was constantly sending them to Christ . . . therefore, they send someone to him, thinking by their flattery that they will induce him to confess that he was the Christ. They do not therefore send inferior people to him . . . servants and Herodians, as they did to Christ, but priests and Levites. And no indiscriminate party are these, but those [priests and Levites] of Jerusalem, that is, the more honorable ones. . . . They send them to ask, "Who are you?" . . . They send them not because they want to be informed but in order to induce him to do what I have said. . . .

John replies then to their intention, not to their interrogation. . . . "And he confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.'" And observe the wisdom of the Evan-

[4]See Acts 5:36 (RSV *Theudas.*) [5]See Acts 5:37. [6]FC 80:183-85**; SC 157:170-72. [7]Is 40:8. [8]*WSA* 3 8:121-22. [9]Lk 1:5, 13. [10]See Lk 1:80. [11]Mt 13:55. [12]Jn 1:46.

gelist. He repeats the same thing three times to show John's virtue and [the priests' and Levites'] wickedness and foolishness. . . . For it is the character of an honest servant not only to forbear taking to himself his lord's glory but even to reject it when many offer it to him. The multitude indeed believed from ignorance that John [the Baptist] was the Christ, but in [the priests and Levites] it was malice, and in this spirit they put the question to him, expecting to draw him over to their purpose by their flattery. If they had not expected this to happen, they would not have proceeded immediately to another question. Instead, they would have been angry with him for giving them an answer outside of what they were asking. . . . When caught, however, and it was discovered what they had in mind, they proceed to another question: "And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?'" Homilies on the Gospel of John 16.1-2.[13]

They Were Looking for Messiah. Augustine: For they knew that Elijah would precede Christ. For the name of Christ was not unknown to any Jew. They did not think that he was the Christ, but they did not think that Christ would not come at all. When they were hoping that he would come, they were offended at him when he did come and stumbled at him as on a low stone. . . . They did not see the lowly stone—but what great blindness not to see the mountain! Tractates on the Gospel of John 4.4.[14]

1:21 *Elijah or the Prophet*

Elijah Ranks Second in Israel's Hope. Origen: Once the priests and Levites, who were sent from Jerusalem, have heard that he is not the awaited Christ, they inquire if he might be Elijah, the person who held the second rank in honor as an object of their hope. He says that he is not Elijah, again confessing the truth through the expression "I am not." Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.44.[15]

John's Reappearing Was Expected. Origen: [Someone] might say that John is Elijah who is to come, in one sense, but that he responded to the priests and Levites, "I am not," because he knew what they were really asking. For the earlier question to John from the priests and Levites was not intended to ascertain if the same spirit was in both men, but if John were that very Elijah who had been taken up, now appearing without a birth according to the Jewish expectation. For those who had been sent from Jerusalem may have been ignorant of John's birth. He appropriately answers this question, "I am not," for Elijah who had been taken up had not come, as if he had changed his body and had been named John.[16] Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.70-71.[17]

John the Baptist Prefigures Elijah. Augustine: The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Elijah has come already, and he is John the Baptist."[18] John, however, when asked, proclaimed that he was not Elijah, just as [he proclaimed] that neither was he the Christ. And, indeed, just as he truly proclaimed that he was not the Christ, so he truly proclaimed that neither was he Elijah.

How then shall we compare the words of the herald with the words of the judge? Far be it from the herald to lie, for he says what he hears from the judge. Why then did he say, "I am not Elijah" and the Lord said, "He is Elijah"? Because in him the Lord Jesus Christ wished to prefigure his future coming and to say that John was in the spirit of Elijah. And what John was to the first coming, this will Elijah be to the second coming. . . . When John was conceived, or rather when he was born, the Holy Spirit prophesied that this was to be fulfilled with regard to that man. "And

[13]NPNF 1 14:55**. [14]NPNF 1 7:26-27**. [15]FC 80:181*; SC 157:162. [16]Origen has an extended discussion concerning those who think that John earlier existed as Elijah through the transmigration of souls as well as what he refers to as a Jewish tradition that Phinehas, who was rumored to be immortal because of his zeal for the Lord (Num 25:7ff.) and his longevity in the book of Judges, was the same as Elijah. [17]FC 80:188**; SC 157:180-82. [18]See Mt 11:14; 17:12.

he will be," he said, "the forerunner of the most high, in the spirit and power of Elijah."[19] Not then Elijah but "in the spirit and power of Elijah." What is "in the spirit and power of Elijah"? It means in the same Holy Spirit in place of Elijah. Why in place of Elijah? Because what Elijah is to the second coming, this John was to the first. Tractates on the Gospel of John 4.5.1-2.[20]

John Is Not Contradicting Jesus. Gregory the Great: When in another place his disciples asked our Lord about the coming of Elijah, he answered, "Elijah has already come, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they please; and if you want to know, John is Elijah."[21] John, when he was asked, said, "I am not." . . .

If we carefully examine truth himself, what sounded contradictory is found to be not contradictory. The angel said to Zechariah, of the promised birth of John, that "he will come in the spirit and power of Elijah."[22] This is said because just as Elijah is the forerunner of the Lord's second coming, so was John the forerunner of his first; as Elijah will come as the forerunner of the Judge, so was John the forerunner of the Redeemer. John, then, was Elijah in spirit; he was not Elijah in person. What the Lord spoke of the spirit, John denied of the person. It was right that the Lord should make a spiritual assertion about John to his disciples and that John should answer the same question to the materialistic crowds not about his spirit but about his body. What John said appears to contradict truth, yet he did not depart from the path of truth. Forty Gospel Homilies 4.[23]

How Could Jews Be Ignorant of John's Birth? Origen: But [someone] will say that it is not consistent that the son of such a great priest as Zechariah, who had been born contrary to all human expectation when both parents were old, was unknown to so many Jews in Jerusalem and to those Levites and priests they sent who do not know that he was born in this way. . . .

For it has been established that those who sent knew that John had been born of Zechariah and Elizabeth, and even more so that those who were sent, since they belonged to the priestly house and would not be unaware of the incredible good offspring of so renowned a fellow kinsman as Zechariah, also knew. What did they have in mind then when they asked, "Are you Elijah?" since they were men who had read that he was taken up as though into heaven and they were waiting for his coming? Perhaps, then, since they expect Elijah before Christ at the consummation, and Christ after him, they seem to ask figuratively, as it were, "Are you the one who announces in advance the word that will precede Christ at the consummation?" He wisely responds to this, "I am not." . . .

It is not strange, therefore, that, just as in the case of the Savior—although many knew of his birth from Mary, others were deceived—so also in the case of John, some were aware of his birth from Zechariah, but others were in doubt whether the awaited Elijah had appeared in the person of John. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.72, 77-78, 81.[24]

***The* Prophet.** Origen: Inasmuch as there were many prophets in Israel—there was one in particular, who had been prophesied by Moses, who was especially expected in accordance with the saying, "The Lord our God shall raise up a prophet like me for you from your brothers; him you shall hear"[25]—they ask a third time, not if he is a prophet but if he is "the prophet."

They do not apply this title to the Christ but suppose that he is another in addition to the Christ. Because John knows that he of whom he is the forerunner is both the Christ and this prophet who was prophesied, he says "No." He might have answered, "Yes," if they had asked their question without using the article,

[19]See Lk 1:17. [20]FC 78:96-97*. [21]Mt 17:12; 11:14. [22]Lk 1:17. [23]CS 123:22. [24]FC 80:188, 190-91**; SC 157:182, 186-88. [25]Deut 18:15; cf. Acts 3:22-23.

for he was not unaware that he was *a* prophet. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.45-46.[26]

More Than a Prophet. Gregory the Great: When John himself was asked, he answered, "I am not a prophet." He who knew that he was more than a prophet said he was not a prophet. He is said to be more than a prophet because it is a prophet's task to foretell things to come, not to point them out as well. John is more than a prophet because with his finger he pointed to the one he spoke of [right at that moment]. Forty Gospel Homilies 1.[27]

A Prophet Similar to Moses Expected. Origen: A certain prophet was specially expected who would be similar to Moses in some respect, to mediate between God and humankind, and who would receive the covenant from God and give the new covenant to those who became disciples. And the people of Israel knew so far as each of the prophets was concerned that no one of them was the one announced by Moses. As, therefore, they were in doubt about whether John was the Christ, so also they were in doubt whether he was "the prophet." It is not strange if those who were in doubt about whether John was the Christ did not understand thoroughly that the Christ and the prophet are the same. For not knowing that Christ and the prophet are the same is the consequence of uncertainty about John. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.90-91.[28]

1:22-23 *The Answer of the Voice Crying in the Wilderness*

Jewish Leaders' Insistence on an Answer. Chrysostom: See how [the priests and Levites] press him more vehemently, repeatedly urging their questions on him without giving up. John for his part first removes their false assumptions about him and then sets before them what is true. Homilies on the Gospel of John 16.2.[29]

The Voice Came Before the Word. Augustine: The voice came before the Word. How can the voice be before the Word? . . . We have heard that Christ is the Word; let us hear that John is the voice. When he was asked, "You then, who are you?" he answered, "I am the voice of one crying in the desert." So if Christ is the Word, John the voice, John was taken over as the voice in order that the Word might be spoken to us. And that the Word might come to us, the voice preceded it. That is why it is both true that Christ was before John in eternity, and that all the same, he had not to be born first, unless John came to us before the Word as the voice. So there is going to be a time when we shall see the Word as he is seen by the angels; now, however, let us make progress in the Word, so that we may remain with him forever. Sermon 293a.5.[30]

John Cries Out to Help the Lost. Origen: But he cries and shouts that both those who are far off may hear him speaking and those who are hard of hearing may understand the greatness of what is said, since it is proclaimed with a loud voice, helping both those who have departed from God and those who have lost keenness of their hearing. . . . Now the necessity of the voice of one crying in the wilderness is that the soul—which is devoid of God and destitute of truth (for what other wilderness is harder to deal with than a soul that is bereft of God and of all virtue?)—might be exhorted to make straight the way of the Lord, because it is still going in a crooked manner and is in need of teaching. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.100, 102.[31]

John the Baptist Indicates that Christ Is the Way. Cyril of Alexandria: I come, [John the Baptist] says nothing else than that the one you are looking for is finally at the doors.

[26]FC 80:181; SC 157:162-64. [27]CS 123:6. [28]FC 80:193-94; SC 157:196. See also Eusebius *Proof of the Gospel* 9.11.444-45 (*POG* 2:175). [29]NPNF 1 14:56**. [30]*WSA* 3 8:161-62*. [31]FC 80:196-97; SC 157:204-6.

Indeed, the Lord is within the doors. Be ready to go whatever way he asks you. You have gone the way given you through Moses, [but now] take up the way of Christ. For this is what the choir of the holy prophets told you beforehand. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.10.[32]

The Purpose Behind John's Preaching. Gregory the Great: I have said before that the prophet called him a voice because he preceded the Word. What he was crying is disclosed to us, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." What else is anyone doing who is preaching the true faith and good works but preparing the way for the Lord to come to his hearers' hearts so that the power of grace may enter them and the light of truth pervade them? He makes the Lord's paths straight when he predisposes the mind for good thoughts by his good preaching. Forty Gospel Homilies 6.[33]

1:24-25 *Why Are You Baptizing If You Are Not the Christ?*

The Hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Origen: After the priests and Levites were sent from Jerusalem to ask John who he was, the Pharisees send to him as well, asking, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the prophet?" After they have examined him, they are the next to be baptized. . . . The difficulty is solved as follows. The Pharisees . . . who heard the words "generation of vipers . . . ,"[34] although they have not believed him, probably come for baptism because they fear the crowd and, in accordance with their hypocrisy toward them, consider it proper to let themselves be washed that they might not seem to be opposed to such people. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.146, 151.[35]

They Try to Trip Up John. Chrysostom: When John says, "I am not the Christ," the Pharisees try to conceal what they were plotting within by asking him about Elijah and the prophet. But when he said that he was not any of these either, they leave behind any pretense and clearly show their treacherous intention, saying, "Why do you baptize then if you are not the Christ?" And then again, wishing to throw some obscurity over the whole thing, they add "Elijah" and "the prophet." For when they were not able to trip him up by their flattery, they thought that by an accusation they could compel him to say something he was not.

What foolishness, insolence and ill-timed interference! You were sent to learn who John was and where he came from, not to involve him in an accusation. This too was the conduct of people who would compel him to confess himself to be the Christ. Still, he is not angry even now, nor does he, as might have been expected, say anything to them like, "Do you give orders and make laws for me?" But again he shows great gentleness toward them. Homilies on the Gospel of John 16.2.[36]

1:26 *John Baptized with Water*

The Purpose of John's Baptism. Cyril of Alexandria: The Baptist teaches those who were sent from the Pharisees now even against their will that Christ was within the doors. For I, he says, am bringing an introductory baptism, washing those defiled by sin with water for a beginning of repentance and teaching them to go up from the lower to the more perfect. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.10.[37]

John Does Not Baptize with the Spirit. Gregory the Great: John did not baptize with the Spirit but with water, since he was unable to take away the sins of those being baptized. He washed their bodies with water but not their hearts with pardon. Why did one whose baptism did not forgive sins baptize, except that he was observing his vocation as forerunner? He whose

[32]LF 43:127*. [33]CS 123:37. [34]Mt 3:7. [35]FC 80:210-11*; SC 157:240, 244. [36]NPNF 1 14:56**. [37]LF 43:129*.

birth foreshadowed greater birth, by his baptizing foreshadowed the Lord who would truly baptize. He whose preaching made him the forerunner of Christ, by baptizing also became his forerunner, using a symbol of the future sacrament. With these other mysteries he makes known the mystery of our Redeemer, declaring that he has stood among people and not been known. The Lord appeared in a human body: he came as God in flesh, visible in his body, invisible in his majesty. Forty Gospel Homilies 4.[38]

John's Baptism Inferior to Jesus' Baptism. Origen: We must note that John's baptism was inferior to Jesus' baptism, which was given through his disciples.[39] Those, therefore, in Acts who have been baptized into John's baptism, who have not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit, are baptized a second time by the apostle.[40] For the washing of regeneration did not come about at the hands of John but at the hands of Jesus through his disciples. And the so-called bath of rebirth takes place with the renewal of the Spirit,[41] which even now is borne above the water,[42] since it is from God. But it does not appear in everyone after the water. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.168-69.[43]

Unseen in Divinity, but Present in the World. Apollinaris of Laodicea: They object to John, "Why then do you baptize, if you are none of these things?" They do not know that not even the Christ—who himself was the prophet—baptized, but rather his disciples. Elijah did not baptize the wood of the altar that needed dousing in the matter of Ahab, but he ordered the priests to do this.[44] Now then, to address the words "Why then do you baptize?" John sets forth his own bodily baptism. But to address the words "if you are not the Christ," he praises the preexisting nature of Christ, saying that he is unseen in his divinity but is present to all the world. He upbraids them for their low opinion about the Christ, and he unites the Word "in the beginning" by his incarnation, as he joins the phrase "whom you do not know" with the words "the one coming after me." He shows the superiority of Christ to himself through the sentence "I am not worthy." And if he is "in the midst" either of the whole world so as to reach every rational creature, or in the midst only of us who have dominion over the world, then in any case the Word is in each person. But if his earlier presence among us remained unperceived, his coming after John would not. As John speaks about the nature of the Word, he also adds some words about his sojourn after him, mentioning that Christ will come after him. Fragments on John 5.[45]

1:27 *John's Unworthiness to Untie Christ's Sandals*

John Came to Teach the Proud Humility. Augustine: And yet, just notice how this forerunner of his Lord, of one who is God and man, how much he humbles himself. No one has arisen greater among those born of women than this man, and here he is, questioned about whether he is himself the Christ. He was so great that people could make this mistake. They wondered whether he was himself the Christ, and they wondered about it seriously enough to question him. Now if he had been a son of pride, not a teacher of humility, he would not have taken steps to make them think that, but he would simply have accepted what they were already thinking. It would possibly have been overreaching himself to wish to persuade people that he was the Christ. If he had tried to do so and had not been believed, he would have been left high and dry, both rejected and dejected, both despised among people and condemned in God's eyes. But there was no need for him to persuade people. He could already see they were thinking this about him. He could simply accept their mistake and

[38]CS 123:23-24. [39]Jn 4:2. [40]Acts 19:2-5. [41]Tit 3:5. [42]See Gen 1:2. [43]FC 80:216*; SC 157:256-58. [44]1 Kings 18:33. Priests are not specified. [45]*JKGK* 6.

boost his own prestige. . . .

Consider how inferior to him he would have been, even if he had been worthy. Consider how much he would have been debasing himself if this is what he had said: "He is greater than I am, and I am only worthy to undo the strap of his sandal." He would have been calling himself worthy at least to stoop down to his feet. But now, as it is, see how exalted he proclaimed him to be when he declared himself unworthy even to touch his feet, or rather his sandals! So John came to teach the proud humility, to proclaim the way of repentance. Sermon 293A.4.[46]

The Sandals of the Bridegroom and the Incarnate Flesh. Gregory the Great: It was a custom among the ancients that if someone was unwilling to take the wife he should be taking, he who should have come to her as bridegroom by right of relationship would undo his sandal.[47] How did Christ appear among men and women if not as the bridegroom of his holy church? John said of him that "he who has the bride is the bridegroom."[48] Since people considered John the Christ, a fact that he denied, he was right to declare his unworthiness to undo the strap of Christ's sandal. It is as if he was saying, "I am not able to lay bare the footsteps of the Redeemer, because I am not unrightfully usurping for myself the name of bridegroom."

We can also interpret this verse in another way. We all know that sandals are made from dead animals. Our Lord came in the flesh; he appeared as if shod in sandals because he assumed in his divinity the dead flesh of our corrupt condition. . . .

The human eye is not able to grasp the mystery of Christ's incarnation. In no way can we discover how the Word took on a body, how the supreme life-giving Spirit came to life in his mother's womb, how he who has not beginning both is and is conceived. The sandal strap is the bond of a mystery. John is not able to undo the strap of his sandal because not even he who recognized the mystery of the Lord's incarnation through the spirit of prophecy can subject it to investigation. Forty Gospel Homilies 4.[49]

Christ Has Left His Footprints on Our Souls. Ambrose: Moses was not the bridegroom, for to him comes the word, "Loose your shoe from off your foot,"[50] that he might give place to his Lord. Nor was Joshua, the son of Nun, the bridegroom, for to him also it was told, saying, "Loose your shoe from off your foot,"[51] lest, by reason of the likeness of his name, he should be thought the spouse of the church. None other is the bridegroom but Christ alone, of whom John said, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom."[52] They, therefore, loose their shoes, but his shoe cannot be loosed, even as John said, "I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." . . . To whom else but the Word of God incarnate can those words apply? "His legs are pillars of marble, set upon bases of gold."[53] For Christ alone walks in the souls and makes his path in the minds of his saints, in which, as upon bases of gold and foundations of precious stone the heavenly Word has left his footprints ineffaceably impressed. On the Christian Faith 3.10.71-74.[54]

1:28 *This Took Place in Bethany*[55]

The Outspokenness of John. Chrysostom: John, who had no concern for the crowd's opinion or anyone else's opinion, which he would rather trample underfoot, proclaimed to all with an attractive kind of freedom the things about Christ. And therefore the Evangelist marks the very place, to show the boldness of the outspoken herald. For it was not in a house, not in a corner, not in the wilderness, but in the middle of the multitude. This was after he had made his presence known at the Jordan when all that were baptized by him were present (for the Jews came

[46] *WSA* 3 11:255*. [47] Ruth 4:7. [48] Jn 3:29. [49] CS 123:24-25*. [50] Ex 3:5. [51] Josh 5:15 (5:16 Vg). [52] Jn 3:29. [53] Song 5:15. [54] NPNF 2 10:253*. [55] Or *Bethabara.*

upon him as he was baptizing). It was here that he proclaimed aloud that wonderful confession concerning Christ, full of those sublime and great and mysterious doctrines. It was here that he said he was not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoe. This is why the Evangelist reports that "these things were done in Bethany," or, as all the more correct copies have it, "in Bethabara." For Bethany was not "beyond Jordan" or bordering on the wilderness, but somewhere near Jerusalem.

He marks the places also for another reason. Since he was not about to relate matters that were out of date, but rather those that had happened just a little before, he makes those who were present and had seen everything witnesses of his words and supplies proof from the places themselves. Confident that nothing was added by himself to what was said, but that he simply and with truth described things as they were, he draws a testimony from the places which, as I said, would be no common demonstration of his veracity. Homilies on the Gospel of John 17.1.[56]

"Bethabara" for "Bethany" Indicates a Baptism of Preparation. Origen: We are not unaware that "Bethany" occurs in nearly all the manuscripts. . . . But since we have been in these places, so far as historical account is concerned, of the footprints of Jesus and his disciples and the prophets, we have been convinced that we ought not to read "Bethany" but "Bethabara." . . .

Bethabara means house of preparation, which agrees with the baptism of him who was making ready a people prepared for the Lord. . . . Jordan, again, means, "their descent." . . . Now what is this river but our Savior, through whom coming into this earth all must be cleansed, in that he came down not for his own sake but for theirs? . . . This is the river that separates the lots given by Moses from those given by Jesus. "The streams" of this "river" that has descended "make glad the city of God."[57] . . .

As the dragon[58] is in the Egyptian river, so God is in the river that makes glad the city of God, for the Father is in the Son. For this reason those who come to wash themselves in him put away the reproach of Egypt[59] and become more worthy to be taken up. They are cleansed from the most abominable leprosy[60] and receive a double portion of gifts and are prepared to receive the Holy Spirit since the dove of the Spirit has not flown to another river.[61] Since, therefore, we have considered the Jordan in a manner more worthy of God, and the baptism in it, and Jesus who was baptized in it, . . . let us draw from the river as much of this help as we need. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.204, 206, 217-19, 249-51.[62]

---

[56]NPNF 1 14:58**. [57]Ps 46:4 (45:5 LXX). [58]The crocodile, but, symbolically, the devil. [59]See Josh 5:9. [60]See the account about Naaman in 2 Kings 5:9-14. [61]See Mk 1:10. In this section Origen is alluding to various conclusions he has drawn previously in his discussion of the Jordan regarding Elijah, Naaman, Elisha and Jesus. [62]FC 80:224-25, 227-28, 235-36**; SC 157:284-86, 294-96, 318.

THE LAMB OF GOD AND HIS BAPTISM JOHN 1:29-34

Overview: John the Evangelist spends more time on this portion of the Gospel narrative than does any other Evangelist. This second appearance of Jesus to John the Baptist is recorded by the Evangelist in order to establish that Jesus was not baptized because of his own sin but to take away the sin of the world (Chrysostom). Now that the Lamb, the spotless sacrifice whose way John was preparing, had arrived, John's work was finished (Cyril of Alexandria). The lamb, as opposed to a ram, sheep or any other kind of animal spoken of in the Old Testament sacrificial system, was an animal in its prime that was offered in the perpetual holocausts offered on behalf of the people (Origen). It was the lamb spoken of in Isaiah (Eusebius) who slays the lion of sin and death (Bede). It brings to mind the ram caught in the thicket of thorns that was sacrificed in place of Isaac, complete with a crown of thorns (Augustine). He is the paschal lamb prefigured in the leading of his people out of the bondage of Egypt through the shedding of his own blood (Melito), also prefigured in Abel's acceptable sacrifice of the first lamb in Genesis (Ambrose) and the lamb that takes the place of the scapegoat (Romanus). We see, then, how the Evangelist moves swiftly from the sublime and divinely exalted prologue to the humility of the suffering lamb who defeats sin with the gift of immortality (Theodore).

John introduces the bride to the bridegroom as Christ is betrothed to his church through John's baptism in keeping with the custom of the Old Testament concerning betrothals (Ephrem). The crowds came primarily to be baptized by John but in the process also hear his preaching about the one greater than he (Chrysostom). Indeed, John's baptism did not endure past his own ministry, and Jesus' submission to it was a servant's example for fellow servants. John's testimony speaks of the descent of the Spirit onto Jesus as a dove, although we should not think that Christ lacked the Spirit when it descended on him, since he had already received it in the womb (Augustine). It resided differently in Christ than in the disciples (Gregory the Great). Theodore believes that only John was granted this vision, just as the prophets of old, but that no one else saw the descent of the Spirit (Theodore). Perhaps others also saw the Spirit's descent, however, although they did not understand it or believe what they saw, as was also often the case with Jesus' miracles. The purpose of the Spirit's descent was to make Christ known (Chrysostom). The Holy Spirit appears as a dove because, just as a dove moans, so the Spirit groans in our hearts and causes us to groan as we seek its help under the burden of sin. Using the imagery of the ark, the dove symbolizes the peace and unity that the Spirit brings to the church, as opposed to the ravens who tear the church apart. We should not spiritualize or make the Spirit's appearance only symbolic, since the Spirit's appearance here, enfleshed in the body of a dove, was as real as our Lord's incarnation (Augustine).

John the Baptist testifies that he did not know Jesus, which is supported by the fact that he was isolated in the wilderness and could not have collaborated with Jesus. In the wilderness, John had a prophetic vision of what later came to fruition in the descent of the Spirit on Jesus (Theodore). John must have known Jesus somewhat, however, since he recognizes Jesus before he baptizes him, even though the unbelieving Jews did not (Chrysostom). He gains a fuller

understanding, once the dove rests upon Jesus, that authority to baptize would rest in Christ alone. While the text does not explicitly say who sent John, ultimately both the Father and the Son sent him (Augustine). The one who sent him told him that the Spirit would remain on the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, which had departed from humankind at the fall, is now restored through Christ in whose perfect nature the Spirit can abide (Cyril of Alexandria) as it descends on the true Noah, the author of the second birth (Cyril of Jerusalem). John testifies that this is no adopted son (Cyril of Alexandria) who will baptize with the Holy Spirit, but rather the Son of God himself (Augustine).

1:29 *Behold, the Lamb of God*

The Complementary Narratives of John and Matthew. Chrysostom: The Evangelists distributed the periods among themselves. Matthew, having cut short his notice of the time before John the Baptist was bound, hurries to that which follows, while the Evangelist John not only does not cut short this period but dwells on it the most. Matthew, after the return of Jesus from the wilderness, says nothing about the intervening period as John does. He says nothing about what the Jews send and said. He skips over all of this and passes immediately to John's imprisonment. "For," he says, "Jesus having heard" that John was betrayed, "withdrew from there."[1] But John does not [say this]. He is silent about the journey into the wilderness described by Matthew. Instead, he relates what followed the descent form the mountain, and after having gone through many circumstances, he then adds, "For John was not yet cast into prison."[2] Homilies on the Gospel of John 17.1.[3]

The Second Appearance Dispels Any Misunderstanding. Chrysostom: Why does Jesus come to him now? Why does he come not merely once, but this second time also? Matthew says that his coming was necessary because of baptism since Jesus adds that he did this "to fulfill all righteousness."[4] But John says that he came again after his baptism when he says, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it rested upon him." Why then did he come to John, since he did not come casually but went expressly to him? . . . Since John had baptized him with many [others], he came so that no one might think that he had hurried to John for the same reason as the rest, that is, to confess his sins and wash in the river for repentance. He comes, in other words, to give John an opportunity of setting this opinion right again. For by saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," he removes the whole suspicion. For it is obvious that one pure enough to be able to wash away the sins of others does not come to confess sins but to give an opportunity to that marvelous herald to impress what he had said more definitely on those who had heard his former words. Homilies on the Gospel of John 17.1.[5]

John's Preparatory Task. Cyril of Alexandria: No longer does John need to "prepare the way," since the one for whom the preparation was being made is right there before his eyes. . . . But now he who of old was dimly pictured, the very Lamb, the spotless Sacrifice, is led to the slaughter for all, that he might drive away the sin of the world, that he might overturn the destroyer of the earth, that dying for all he might annihilate death, that he might undo the curse that is upon us. . . . For one Lamb died for all,[6] saving the whole flock on earth to God the Father, one for all, that he might subject all to God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[7]

Why a Lamb? Origen: There are five animals that are offered on the altar, three being land animals and two winged.[8] It seems worthwhile to me to ask why the Savior is said to be a "lamb" by

[1]Mt 14:13. [2]Jn 3:24. [3]NPNF 1 14:58-59*. [4]Mt 3:15. [5]NPNF 1 14:59**. [6]2 Cor 5:14. [7]LF 43:131-32**. [8]Lev 5:6-7, 18.

John and none of the rest. But also, in the case of the land animals, since three types of animal are offered according to each species, why did he name the lamb from the species of sheep? Now these are the five animals: a young bull, a sheep, a goat, a turtledove, a pigeon.

And the three types of sheep are a ram, the ewe and the lamb. . . . It is the lamb, however, that we find offered in the perpetual sacrifices.[9] . . . What other perpetual sacrifice can be spiritual to a spiritual being than the Word in his prime, the Word symbolically called "lamb"? . . . But if we examine the declaration about Jesus, who is pointed out by John in the words "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," from the standpoint of the plan of salvation when the Son of God bodily lived among the human race, we will assume that the lamb is none other than his humanity. For he "was led as a sheep to the slaughter and was dumb as a lamb before its shearer,"[10] saying, "I was an innocent lamb being led to be sacrificed."[11]

This is why in the Apocalypse, too, a little lamb is seen "standing as though slain."[12] This lamb, indeed, which was slain according to certain secret reasons, has become the expiation of the whole world.[13] According to the Father's love for humanity, he also submitted to slaughter on behalf of the world, purchasing us with his own blood from him who bought us when we had sold ourselves into sin. He, however, who led this lamb to the sacrifice was God in man, the great high priest,[14] who reveals this through the saying, "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.264-65, 268, 270, 273-75.[15]

Setting the Seal on the Predictions. Eusebius of Caesarea: The sacrifice was the Christ of God, foretold in ancient times as coming to human beings, to be sacrificed like a sheep for the whole human race. As Isaiah the prophet says of him: "As a sheep he was led to slaughter, and as a lamb before her shearers he did not open his mouth."[16] And he adds, "He bears our sins and is pained for us; yet we accounted him to be in trouble, and in suffering, and our sins, and he was made sick on account of our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. . . . And the Lord has given him up for our iniquities. . . . For he himself did not sin, nor was guile found in his mouth."[17] Jeremiah, another Hebrew prophet, speaks similarly in the person of Christ: "I was led as a lamb to the slaughter."[18]

John the Baptist sets the seal on their predictions at the appearance of our Savior. For beholding him, and pointing him out to those present as the one foretold by the prophets, he cried, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." Proof of the Gospels 1.10.15-17.[19]

The Lamb Slays the Lion. Bede: [Jesus] gave his blood as the price for our salvation, and by undergoing death for a time he condemned the sovereignty of death forever. The Lamb that was innocent was killed. But by a wonderful and longed-for display [of his power] he efficaciously weakened the strength of the lion that had killed him. The Lamb that took away the sins of the world brought to naught the lion that had brought sins into the world. It was the Lamb that restored us by the offering of his flesh and blood, so that we would not perish. Homilies on the Gospels 2.7.[20]

Christ Both Lamb and Ram. Augustine: It was Christ that was represented by a ram, Christ by a lamb, Christ by a calf, Christ by a goat—everything was Christ. He was represented by the ram because it leads the flock. It was found in the thorns when our father Abraham was ordered

[9]See Ex 29:38-44. [10]Is 53:7. [11]Jer 11:19. [12]Rev 5:6. [13]See Rev 5:9. [14]See Heb 8:1. Origen is making a contrast here between Christ's divine nature, which functioned as the high priest who made the offering, and his human nature, which was the lamb that was offered. See Origen *Homilies on Genesis* 8.9 (FC 71:149). Eusebius makes a similar point in his *Proof of the Gospels* 10, Intro (*POG* 2:190). [15]FC 80:240-43**; SC 157:330-38. [16]Is 53:7. [17]Is 53:4-9 LXX. [18]Jer 11:19. [19]*POG* 1:57*. [20]CS 111:66.

to spare his son but not to depart without offering any sacrifice. Isaac was Christ, and the ram was Christ. Isaac carried the wood for sacrificing himself; Christ was burdened with his own cross. The ram was substituted for Isaac; but not of course Christ for Christ. But Christ was in both Isaac and the ram. The ram was caught by its horns in the thorn bush; ask the Jews what they crowned the Lord with that time. He is the lamb: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." Sermon 19.3.[21]

The Paschal Lamb Who Leads Israel Out of Bondage. Melito of Sardis:

The Scripture of the exodus of the Hebrews
has been read,
and the words of the mystery have been
declared;
how the sheep was sacrificed,
and how the people was saved,
and how Pharaoh was flogged by the mystery.

Therefore, well-beloved, understand,
how the mystery of the Pascha
is both new and old,
eternal and provisional,
perishable and imperishable,
mortal and immortal. . . .

The sheep is perishable,
but the Lord,
not broken as a lamb but raised up as God,
is imperishable.
For though led to the slaughter like a sheep,
he was no sheep.
Though speechless as a lamb,
neither yet was he a lamb.
For there was once a type, but now the reality
has appeared.

For instead of the lamb there was a son,
and instead of the sheep a man;
in the man was Christ encompassing all
things. . . .
For he was born a son,
and led as a lamb,
and slaughtered as a sheep,
and buried as a man,
and rose from the dead as God,
being God by his nature and a man.

He is all things. . . .
He is son, in that he is begotten.
He is sheep, in that he suffers.
He is human, in that he is buried.
He is God, in that he is raised up.
This is Jesus the Christ,
to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

On Pascha 1-2, 4-10.[22]

Abel's Sacrifice Prefigures Christ's. Ambrose: Abel knew how to divide when he offered a sacrifice from "the firstlings of his flock,"[23] teaching that the gifts of the earth, which had degenerated in the sinner, will not please God. But those in which the grace of the divine mystery shone forth will please him. And so he prophesied that we were to be redeemed from fault through the passion of the Lord, of whom it is written: "Here is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Thus, too, he made an offering from the firstlings, that he might signify the firstborn. Therefore, he shows that God's true sacrifice would be us, of whom the prophet says, "Bring to the Lord the offspring of rams."[24] And worthily is he confirmed by the judgment of God. On the Sacrament of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1.4.[25]

The Lamb Replaces the Scapegoat. Romanus Melodus:

Now the garment of mourning is rent; we have
put on the white robe[26]
Which the spirit has woven for us from the
lamb's fleece of our Lamb and our God;
Sin is taken away, and immortality is given
us,[27] our restoration is clear.

[21]*WSA* 3 1:379-80. [22]MOP 37-39. [23]Gen 4:4. [24]Ps 28:1 LXX. [25]FC 44:220*. [26]Baptismal rite. [27]1 Cor 15:53.

The Forerunner has proclaimed it. . . .

O, the message of the Baptist, and the mystery in it!
He calls the shepherd lamb, and not only a lamb, but one to free from mistakes.
He showed the lawless that the goat which they sent into the desert was ineffective.[28]
"Lo," he said, "the lamb; there is no longer need of the goat;[29]
Put your hands on Him,[30]
All of you who confess your sins,
For He has come to take them away, those of the people, and of the whole world.
For lo, the One whom the Father has sent to us is the One who carries away evil,
Who appeared and illumined all things."
Kontakion on the Epiphany 6.12-13.[31]

John Moves from Divine Prologue to Suffering Lamb. Theodore of Mopsuestia: As appears from the narrative of the Evangelist, John the Baptist said his previous words as if the Lord had come already and walked among crowds who still ignored him. Now, since he is coming to be baptized, he is described with the words "this is the Lamb of God." Let us consider how Scripture likes to place words in the appropriate context of facts. By saying in this passage, "This is the one who takes away the sin of the world," he did not say "the only begotten Son," or the "Son of God" or "the one who is close to the father's bosom," which appear in what he said above. Although now it would have seemed right to express the greatness of his nature, in order to confirm the promise of the things he was going to give. But this is not what he said. Instead, he called him "lamb," and with this name he signifies his passion. In fact, he was called lamb and sheep to signify his death when he washed away sin. Since the sin reigned in our mortality, and death was gaining strength in us because of sin, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior came and remitted all these things to us. And after destroying death through his death, he also destroyed the sin rooted in our nature because of mortality. Through his promise he made us immortal, and he will render us so in reality when he defeats sin with the gift of immortality. Commentary on John 1.1.29.[32]

1:30-31 *John's Baptism Makes Christ Known to Israel*

Betrothal Through Baptism. Ephrem the Syrian: Eliezar sought Rebekah as a bride at a well of water.[33] Jacob sought Rachel at a well of water,[34] as Moses did so with Zipporah.[35] Thus, all of these were types of the Lord, who sought his church as a bride by the baptism at the Jordan River.[36] And just as Eliezar made Rebekah known to his master when he came to meet her in the field, so also John made our Savior known at the Jordan: "See, the Lamb of God, for he takes away the sin of the world." Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 3.17.[37]

Why Jesus Was Baptized. Chrysostom: Jesus then did not need baptism, nor did that washing have any other object than to prepare for all others a way to faith in Christ. For [the Baptist] did not say, "that I might cleanse those who are baptized" or "that I might deliver them from their sins" but "that he should be made known to Israel." And why, tell me, could he not have preached without baptism and still brought the multitudes to him? But this would not have made it any easier. For they would not have all run together like they did, if the preaching had been without baptism. They would not by the comparison have learned his superiority. The multitude came together not to hear his words, but for what? They came to be "baptized, confessing their sins." But when they came, they were taught the matters pertaining to Christ and the difference of his bap-

[28]Lev 16:8. [29]Cf. Aaron in Lev 16:21. [30]The Lamb. [31]*KRBM* 1:63-64*. [32]CSCO 4 3:41-42. [33]See Gen 24:1-67. [34]See Gen 29:1-20. [35]See Ex 2:16-21. [36]See Eph 5:22-23. [37]CB709 add:20.

tism. Yet even this baptism of John was of greater dignity than the Jewish one, and therefore all ran to it; yet even so it was imperfect. Homilies on the Gospel of John 17.2.[38]

John's Baptism Did Not Endure. Augustine: John received the ministry of baptism so that by the water of repentance he might prepare the way for the Lord, not being himself the Lord. But where the Lord was known, it was superfluous to prepare for him the way, for to those who knew him he himself became the way. Therefore the baptism of John did not last long, but [it lasted long enough] to show our Lord's humility. . . . And did the Lord need to be baptized? I instantly reply to any one who asks this question: Was it needful for the Lord to be born? Was it needful for the Lord to be crucified? Was it needful for the Lord to die? Was it needful for the Lord to be buried? If he undertook for us so great a humiliation, might he not also receive baptism? . . .

When the Lord was baptized with the baptism of John, the baptism of John ceased. John was then cast into prison. Afterwards we do not find that anyone is baptized with that baptism. . . . But if John had baptized the Lord alone, some would have thought that the baptism of John was more holy than that of Christ, as if Christ alone had been found worthy to be baptized with the baptism of John, but the human race with that of Christ. . . . And thus the baptism of the servant would appear greater than the baptism of the Lord. Others were also baptized with the baptism of John, [however,] so that the baptism of John might not appear better than the baptism of Christ. But the Lord also was baptized so that, through the Lord receiving the baptism of the servant, other servants might not disdain to receive the baptism of the Lord. This then is why John was sent. Tractates on the Gospel of John 4.12-14.[39]

1:32 *The Spirit Descending from Heaven like a Dove*

Not the First Time Christ Received the Spirit. Augustine: Christ was certainly not then anointed with the Holy Spirit when the Spirit as a dove descended upon him at his baptism. For here he condescends to prefigure his body, that is, his church, in which preeminently the baptized receive the Holy Spirit. . . . For it would be most absurd to believe that he received the Holy Spirit when he was near thirty years of age. For that was the age at which he was baptized by John.[40] But although he came to baptism without any sin at all, he did not come without the Holy Spirit. For it was written of his servant and forerunner John himself, "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb."[41] If [John], though generated by his father, still received the Holy Spirit when formed in the womb, what must be understood and believed of the man Christ whose flesh had not a carnal but spiritual conception? On the Trinity 15.26.46.[42]

Spirit Remains in Christ Differently than in Disciples. Gregory the Great: It is written in the Gospel that the one on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on, this is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit descends on all the faithful. But he only remains on the mediator—and does so in a special way. For he has never left the Son's human nature even as he proceeds from his divine nature. . . . But when the voice of truth tells the disciples that this same Spirit, "will dwell with you and shall be in you," how is this abiding of the Spirit declared by the voice of God supposed to be a peculiar sign of the mediator? . . . This will appear if we distinguish between the different gifts of the Spirit. There are some gifts which are necessary for attaining life and there are others through which holiness of life becomes evident for the good of others. Gentleness, humility, faith, hope and charity are all gifts that come

[38]NPNF 1 14:59** (italics added). [39]NPNF 1 7:29-30**. [40]Lk 3:21-23. [41]Lk 1:15. [42]NPNF 1 3:224**.

from the Spirit and are gifts a person needs in order to attain life. . . . In the case of these gifts . . . the Holy Spirit always remains. . . . But with respect to those which have for their object, not our own salvation, but that of others, he does not always abide. . . . Instead, sometimes he withdraws and ceases to exhibit them so that people should be more humble in the possession of his gifts. . . . But the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, always had all the gifts of the Spirit without interruption. Morals on the Book of Job 2.56.90-92.[43]

John Has a Prophetic Vision. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Here it is evident that the Spirit descending like a dove on the baptized Lord was not seen by all those present, but by John only in a sort of spiritual vision. Similarly, the prophets amid many people were used to seeing those things that were invisible to all the others. It would have been useless to say that John testified and said, "I saw the Spirit," if all those present had been participants in that vision as well. Commentary on John 1.1.32.[44]

Why Didn't the Appearance of the Spirit Curb Their Unbelief? Chrysostom: The Father sent forth his voice proclaiming the Son, the Holy Spirit came upon him as well, focusing the voice upon the head of Christ . . . in order that no one present might think that what was said of Christ was said of John. . . . But someone might ask: How was it that the Jews did not believe, if they saw the Spirit? Such sights, however, require the mental vision rather than the bodily. If those who saw Christ working miracles were so drunk with malice that they denied what their own eyes had seen, how could the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove overcome their unbelief? Some say, however, that the sight was not visible to all, but only to John and those more disposed toward devotion.[45] But even if the descent of the Spirit, as a dove, was visible to the outward eye, it does not follow that because all saw it, all understood it. Homilies on the Gospel of John 17.3.[46]

Christ Did Not Lack the Holy Spirit. Chrysostom: To prevent any, however, from thinking that Christ really lacked the Holy Spirit in the way that we do, [the Baptist] corrects this notion also by informing us that the descent of the Holy Spirit took place only for the purpose of making Christ known. Homilies on the Gospel of John 17.2.[47]

The Holy Spirit Enfleshed as a Dove. Augustine: We do not attribute only to Christ the possession of a real body and say that the Holy Spirit assumed a false appearance to people's eyes. For the Holy Spirit could no more, in consistency with his nature, deceive people than could the Son of God. The almighty God, who made every creature out of nothing, could as easily form a real body of a dove, without the instrumentality of other doves, as he made a real body in the womb of the Virgin without the seed of the male. Christian Combat 22.24.[48]

The Spirit Moans in Us like a Dove. Augustine: Because we love you in Christ, love us in return in Christ; and let our love for one another [voice its] moaning to God, for moaning is itself a characteristic of the dove. If, then, moaning is characteristic of a dove, as we all know, but doves moan in love, hear what the apostle says, and do not wonder that the Holy Spirit wished to be shown in the form of a dove. He says, "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unspeakable groanings."[49] Well now, my brothers, are we to say that the Spirit groans when he has perfect and eternal happiness with the Father and the Son? For the Holy Spirit is God, as the Son of God is God and the Father God. . . . Therefore the Holy Spirit does not moan in himself with himself

[43]LF 18:127-28**. [44]CSCO 4 3:45-46. [45]See Theodore above. [46]NPNF 1 14:60-61**. [47]NPNF 1 14:59-60**. [48]CSEL 41:125. [49]Cf. Rom 8:26.

in that Trinity, in that beatitude, in that eternity of his substance; but he moans in us because he makes us moan. . . . One who knows that he lives in the midst of affliction in this mortal life and that he is exiled from the Lord,[50]. . . moans well. It is the Spirit that has taught him to moan. He learned it from the dove. Tractates on the Gospel of John 6.1.2-2.3.[51]

The Spirit of Peace in the Church. Augustine: The Holy Spirit was made to appear visibly in two ways: as a dove, on our Lord at his baptism, and as a flame upon his disciples when they were gathered together. . . . The former shape denoted simplicity, the latter fervency. . . . The dove intimates that those who are sanctified by the Spirit should have no guile; the fire indicates that in that simplicity there should not be coldness. Nor let it disturb you that the tongues are divided, for tongues are diverse; therefore the appearance was that of cloven tongues. . . . Do not fear division; recognize unity in the dove. . . .

It was appropriate then that the Holy Spirit should be manifested in this way descending on our Lord so that every one who had the Spirit might know that he ought to be simple as a dove and be in sincere peace with his brothers and sisters. The kisses of doves represent this peace. . . . Ravens kiss, but they also tear; but the nature of doves is innocent of tearing. . . . Ravens feed on the dead, but the dove eats nothing but the fruits of the earth. Its food is innocent. . . .

That is why on this occasion the most holy Trinity appeared, the Father in the voice that said, "You are my beloved Son" and the Holy Spirit in the likeness of the dove. In that Trinity . . . the apostles were sent [to baptize], that is, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. . . . What then could more appropriately represent the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of unity, than the dove? As he said himself to his reconciled church, "My dove is one."[52] What could better express humility than the simplicity and moaning of a dove? Tractates on the Gospel of John 6.3-5, 10.[53]

1:33 *I Myself Did Not Know Him*

Why John Lived in the Wilderness. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He revealed why he lived in the wilderness. This certainly happened through a special providence of God, in order that he might not have any relationship with the Messiah. And John certainly would have had such a relationship if he had lived in town, since they were of the same age and they were related. The suspicion would have easily arisen that he had testified those words because of that previous relationship and because of their friendship and the fact that they were related. In order to remove this suspicion, John was segregated from adolescence onward and grew up in the wilderness. Therefore, with good reason he said, "I myself did not know him." I had no familiarity or friendship with him, but I was sent to baptize with water for him so that I might reveal him whom I did not know. He clearly showed that he baptized so that all the Jews who came because of the baptism might have an occasion to hear his doctrine and to see him to whom he testified. Commentary on John 1.1.33.[54]

John's Prophetic Vision Comes to Fruition. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He who sent me so that I might reveal before everybody that he had come—and therefore he gave me the power to baptize with water—predicted to me that the Spirit would descend on him. These words were said to the Baptist while he was in the wilderness, and immediately he who indeed did [preach and baptize] came. As the Lord then came to John, he immediately received the vision so that he might recognize the Lord. This is why he preached so publicly about his greatness. When he, while administering the baptism, saw in a spiritual vision the Spirit descending, as had been predicted to him, then he was sure that he

[50]Cf. 2 Cor 5:6. [51]FC 78:129-30**. [52]Song 6:9 LXX. [53]NPNF 1 7:40-41**. See also Ambrose *On the Holy Spirit* 1.8.93 concerning the unifying Spirit. [54]CSCO 4 3:44-45.

was seeing the expected result of the prophecy. Commentary on John 1.1.33.[55]

Who Sent John, and How Well Did John Know Jesus? Augustine: Who then sent John? If we say the Father, we speak truly. If we say the Son, we speak truly. But to speak more plainly, we say both the Father and the Son sent him. . . . How, then, didn't he know him by whom he is sent? . . . If, then, the Son sent you with the Father, how did you not know who sent you? The one who sent you said, "Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending as a dove and abiding on him, the same is he that baptizes with the Holy Spirit." Did John hear this so that he might know him whom he had not known, or so that he might more fully know him whom he had already known? If he had been entirely ignorant of him, he would not have said what he did to him when he came to the river to be baptized. . . . This would have implied that he didn't know him, but that when the dove descended, he learned to know him. . . . It is made plain to us therefore that John after a manner knew and after a manner did not initially know the Lord. Tractates on the Gospel of John 5.1-2.[56]

John Did Know Jesus, but Not for That Long. Chrysostom: How then, if he did not know him before the descent of the Spirit, and if he then for the first time recognized him—how then did he forbid him before baptism, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?"[57] Actually, this proved that he knew him very well. Yet he did not know him before, or at least for that long—and with good cause, for the amazing things that took place when he was a child, such as the visit of the magi, had happened long before when John himself was very young. And since a lot of time had elapsed in the interval, Jesus was naturally unknown to all. For had he been known, John would not have said, "I come baptizing so that he should be made known to Israel." Homilies on the Gospel of John 17.2.[58]

John Learns More about Jesus after the Appearance of the Dove. Augustine: But did he know Christ, or did he not know him? If he did not know him, then why, when Christ came to the river, did he say, "I need to be baptized by you"? In other words, he's saying: I know who you are. If, then, he already knew him, assuredly he knew him when he saw the dove descending. It is evident that the dove did not descend upon the Lord until after he went up out of the water of baptism. . . . But if this is not the first time he recognizes him, because he already knew, then why did he say, "I didn't know him"? Tractates on the Gospel of John 4.15.[59]

Jesus Reserves the Power of Baptism to Himself. Augustine: It was not that he did not know him to be the Son of God, or did not know him to be the Lord, or did not know him to be the Christ, or did not, also, in fact, know that he himself would baptize with water and the Holy Spirit; for he knew this too. But that he would baptize in this way, namely, that he would keep for himself the power and would transfer it to no one of his ministers, this is what he learned in the dove. For through this power, which Christ kept for himself alone and transmitted to none of his ministers, although he deigned to baptize through his ministers, through this abides the unity of the Church which is signified in the dove, about which it is said, "One is my dove, the only one her mother has."[60] Tractates on the Gospel of John 6.6.[61]

Christ Receives the Spirit So We Can Receive the Spirit. Cyril of Alexandria: The divine Scripture testifies that human beings were made in the image and likeness of God who

[55]CSCO 4 3:46. [56]NPNF 1 7:32**. [57]Mt 3:14. [58]NPNF 1 14:60**. [59]NPNF 1 7:30-31**. [60]Song 6:9 (6:8 Vg). See J. Robert Wright, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, ACCS OT 9, 354-55 on this passage. The unity of the church, brought about by the Holy Spirit, was often depicted by a dove; thus the connection here Augustine identifies between the dove, the Spirit and the church. [61]FC 78:134.

is over all.[62] . . . For the Spirit at once began to put life into what he had formed and to impress his own divine image on it there.[63] . . . Subsequently, however, the likeness to God was defaced through the inroad of sin and the impress was no longer bright as it was. It had grown fainter and darkened because of sin. And when sin became so great . . . that human nature was stripped of its ancient grace, the Spirit departed altogether. Then this creature endowed with reason fell into the most extreme kind of foolishness, ignorant even of its Creator. But then the maker of all, after enduring a lengthy amount of time, finally pities the corrupted world. Because he is good, he hurried to gather together his runaway flock upon earth in order to bring it to those who dwell above. He agreed to transform[64] human nature anew to its pristine image through the Spirit. For in no other way was it possible for the divine impress to again shine forth in men and women as it once had. Let us now look at this plan and how he implanted in us the inviolate grace. Let us see how the Spirit again took root in humanity and in what way nature was reformed into its prior condition. . . .

Since the first Adam did not preserve the grace given him by God, God the Father intended to send us from heaven the second Adam. For he sends in our likeness his own Son who is by nature without variableness or change, and who in no way knew any sins.[65] He did this so that even as through the disobedience of the first Adam we became subject to divine wrath, so through the obedience of the Second Adam, we might both escape the curse, and its evils might come to nothing.[66] But when the Word of God became man, he received the Spirit from the Father as one of us. He did not receive anything for himself individually since he himself was the Giver of the Spirit. And so, he who knew no sin might, by receiving it as man, preserve it for our nature, and might again in-root in us the grace which had left us. This is the reason I think it was that the holy Baptist profitably added, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven, and it rested upon him." For it had fled from us because of sin, but he who knew no sin became as one of us so that the Spirit might be accustomed to abide in us, having no occasion of departure or withdrawal in him. Therefore through himself he receives the Spirit for us, and renews to our nature, the ancient good. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[67]

The Holy Spirit and the Dove of Noah. Cyril of Jerusalem: This Holy Spirit came down when the Lord was baptized so that the dignity of him who was baptized might not be hidden. . . . The heavens too were opened because of the dignity of him who descended. For see, he says, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and lighting upon him.[68] The Spirit descended voluntarily. For it was appropriate, as some have interpreted, that the primacy and firstfruits of the Holy Spirit promised to the baptized should be conferred upon the humanity of the Savior first since the Spirit is the giver of such grace. But perhaps he came down in the form of a dove, as some say, to exhibit a figure of that dove who is pure and innocent and undefiled—who also helps the prayers of the children she has begotten and who brings forgiveness of sins. It was emblematically foretold that Christ should be made known in this way in the appearance of his eyes. For in the Song of Songs she cries concerning the Bridegroom, and says, "Your eyes are as doves by the rivers of water."[69]

The dove of Noah, according to some, was in part a figure of this dove.[70] In the time of Noah, salvation came to them by means of wood and

---

[62]Gen 1:27. [63]Gen 2:7. [64]Or "transelement." [65]2 Cor 5:21. [66]Rom 5:19. [67]LF 43:141-43**. [68]Mt 3:16. [69]Song 5:12. [70]Tertullian *On Baptism* 8: "Just as after the waters of the deluge, by which the old iniquity was purged—after the baptism, so to say, of the world—a dove was the herald which announced to the earth the assuagement of celestial wrath . . . so to our flesh, as it emerges from the font after its old sins, flies the dove of the Holy Spirit, bringing us the peace of God, sent out from heaven where the church is, the typified ark" (ANF 3:673). Compare also Hippolytus *The Holy Theophany*, §§ 8, 9, a treatise with which Cyril has much in common.

water along with the beginning of a whole new generation. And, the dove returned to him towards evening with an olive branch. Just as this happened, they say, so the Holy Spirit also descended upon the true Noah, the author of the second birth, who draws together into one the wills of all nations. The various dispositions of the animals in the ark were in fact a figure of him too—him at whose coming the spiritual wolves feed with the lambs, in whose church the calf, and the lion, and the ox, feed in the same pasture, as we behold to this day the rulers of the world guided and taught by churchmen. The spiritual dove therefore, as some interpret, came down at the season of his baptism so that he might show that it is he who by the wood of the cross saves those who believe, he who when evening comes grants salvation through his death. Catechetical Lectures 17.9-10.[71]

1:34 *John Saw and Witnessed to the Son of God*

John Understood and Testified to Jesus' Divinity. Cyril of Alexandria: A confident witness is one who not only sees but actually speaks about what he has seen. [John] surely was not ignorant of what was written, "Tell what your eyes have seen."[72] "I saw" then, he says, the sign, and I understood what was signified by it. I bear witness "that this is the Son of God," who was proclaimed by the law through Moses and heralded by the voice of the holy prophets. The blessed Evangelist seems to me again to say with supreme confidence, "This is the Son of God," that is, the one and only one who is by nature the unique[73] heir of the Father to whom we too, sons by adoption, are conformed and through whom we are called by grace to the dignity of sonship. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[74]

It Is the Only Son Who Baptizes. Augustine: "John testified . . . that he was the Son of God." Therefore, it was necessary that he [Jesus] baptize, who was the only Son of God, not an adopted [son]. The adopted sons are the ministers of the only Son. The only Son has power, the adopted sons have the ministry. Tractates on the Gospel of John 7.4.[75]

[71]NPNF 2 7:126*. [72]Prov 25:7 LXX. [73]Gk *idiōtēs*. [74]LF 43:147**. [75]FC 78:157.

The Calling of the First Disciples John 1:35-42

Overview: John the Baptist chooses to remain at the river to give the bride (the nascent church) to the bridegroom Christ. He also speaks here again of *the* lamb who continuously and for all time takes away the sin of the world (Chrysostom). When the disciples of John hear him speak about Jesus, they choose to abandon the voice of John in favor of Jesus the Word (Ephrem). Those who follow the Lord will not abandon the lessons of humility that he demonstrated as the Son of God (Bede). Jesus immediately seeks to gauge their trust when he asks them, "What do you seek?" (Theodore). They, in turn, show their eagerness to learn in asking where he lives so that they may spend a more extended time with him (Cyril of Alexandria). They leave at the tenth hour, which is prefigured by the law (Augustine). Of the two disciples who followed Jesus home, only one, Andrew, is mentioned by name; the other most likely is John (Theodore). We see from Andrew's words, "We have found the Christ," that perhaps Jesus' reappearance at the Jordan had sparked renewed interest in the Messiah, an interest initiated by the visit of the magi years earlier (Ephrem). But these words also testify to Andrew's own longing for the coming of the Messiah (Chrysostom). Andrew brings his brother Peter to Jesus, and this is where Jesus first changes Simon's name to Peter, although Matthew also mentions a later account where Jesus uses this name, already given earlier. The change of name from Simon to Peter, which means "rock," is symbolic of the church built on a solid foundation (Augustine). Whenever anything happens that reverses a person's vocational course, God changes the name to reflect the new situation (Chrysostom).

1:35-36 *John Again Beholds the Lamb of God*

Why Was John Still at the River? Chrysostom: Why then didn't John go over all of Judea preaching Christ, rather than standing by the river waiting for him to come so that he could point him out when he came? He did this because he wanted Christ himself to accomplish this. . . . Observe the much greater effect this had, for what started out as a little spark at once grew into a burning flame. . . .

Besides, if John had gone about saying all these things, what was being done would have seemed to be done from some human motivation and would have caused his preaching to be viewed with suspicion. Homilies on the Gospel of John 18.2-3.[1]

Behold, the Bridegroom. Chrysostom: "Again," says the Evangelist, "John stood and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God.'" Christ says nothing; his messenger says it all. This is how it is with a bridegroom. He says nothing for awhile to the bride but remains there in silence while someone shows him to the bride and others give her into his hands. She merely appears, and he only takes her for himself when he has received her from another who gives her to him. And when he receives her given to him in this way he treats her in such a way that she no longer remembers those who betrothed her. So it was with Christ. He came to join to himself the church. He said nothing but merely came. It was his friend, John [the Baptist], who put into his hand the bride's right hand when by his teaching he gave the souls of men and women into his hand. And after Christ received them, he treated them in such a way that they no longer left to see John, who had committed them to him.

[1]NPNF 1 14:64**. .

And there is something further here as well. Just like in a marriage, the bride does not go to the bridegroom; rather, he hurries to her, even if he is a king's son and is about to marry some poor and abject person or even a servant. This is what was happening here. Human nature did not go up but, contemptible and poor as it was, [Christ] came to our human nature. And when the marriage had taken place, he no longer endured waiting. Instead, once he had taken [the bride] to himself, he then took her to the house of his Father. Homilies on the Gospel of John 18.1-2.[2]

Christ Is *the* Lamb Sacrificed Once for All. Chrysostom: Not by voice alone but with his eyes also [John] bore witness to and expressed his esteem and praise of Christ. At this point he addresses no word of exhortation to his followers either. Instead he only shows wonder and astonishment at the one who was present. John declares to everyone the gift that this one came to give. He also declares the manner of purification. For "the Lamb" declares both of these things. Notice also he did not say "who shall take" or "who has taken" but "who takes away the sins of the world," because this is what he continually does. He took them not only then when he suffered, but from that time even to the present he takes them away. He is not repeatedly crucified (for he offered one sacrifice for sins) but by that one sacrifice continually purges them. As then the Word shows us his preeminence and the Son his superiority in comparison with others, so the lamb, the Christ, that prophet, the true light, the good shepherd and whatever other names are applied to him with the addition of the article, mark a great difference. For there were many "lambs" and "prophets" and "christs" and "sons." But John separates [Christ] from all of these by a wide margin. He secured this not only by the article but by the addition of "only begotten," since he had nothing in common with the creation. Homilies on the Gospel of John 18.2.[3]

1:37 *Two Disciples Follow Jesus*

The Voice Sends Disciples to the Word. Ephrem the Syrian: Because the disciples of John heard him when he spoke about our Lord, they left their teacher and went after our Lord, because [John's] voice was not able to keep the disciples with him [John], but it sent them to the Word. It was indeed right that when the light of the sun came into view, the light of the lamp should vanish.[4] Truly for this reason John remained, that his baptism would be brought to an end by the baptism of our Lord. Soon he died, so that he might be foremost among the dead, just as he was a sign of Sheol in his mother's womb. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 4.17.[5]

Following the Lord by Imitation. Bede: From [John's] disciples [Jesus] summoned two to follow him, and one of them, Andrew, led his brother Peter to him also. According to the spiritual sense, it is clear what it means to follow the Lord. . . . You follow the Lord if you imitate him. You follow the Lord if, insofar as human weakness allows, you do not abandon those examples of humility that, as a human being, the Son of God demonstrated. You follow [the Lord] if, by showing yourself to be a companion of his sufferings, you painstakingly long to attain communion in his resurrection and ascension. Homilies on the Gospels 1.17.[6]

1:38 *What Do You Seek?*

An Occasion for Trust. Theodore of Mopsuestia: At once his disciples, who were present, after hearing his words, left John and hurried to go to Jesus about whom John testified. "When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?'" He did not say this out of ignorance but rather in order to give them an occasion to trust him. They immediately called him "Rabbi" and showed their profound

[2]NPNF 1 14:63**; Kierkegaard's parable of the king and the maiden in *Philosophical Fragments* reflects Chrysostom's exegesis of this verse [3]NPNF 1 14:64**. [4]See Jn 5:35. [5]CB709 add:34. [6]CS 110:167.

intention, that is, that they had been led to Jesus for no other reason but the desire to obey him as a teacher. And at the same time they asked him where he lived, as if they wanted to come to him often. He did not point out a house but told them to come along with him and see, by giving them the space for greater familiarity and trust toward him. Commentary on John 1.1.38.[7]

Eagerness to Learn. Cyril of Alexandria: Those who are asked reply like people who are well instructed. Notice already how they call him "Rabbi,"[8] thereby clearly signifying their readiness to learn. Then they beg to know where he lives, since they are looking for an appropriate time to tell him their concerns. They probably did not think it was right to talk about such vital topics as companions on a journey. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[9]

1:39-41 *Andrew Finds Simon His Brother*

Fulfilling the Law. Augustine: Do we think that it was not at all important for the Evangelist to tell us what hour it was? Is it possible that he wanted us to notice nothing there, to seek nothing? It was the tenth hour. This number signifies the law, for the law was given in Ten Commandments. But the time had come that the law was to be fulfilled through love because it could not be fulfilled by the Jews through fear. This is why the Lord says, "I have not come to destroy the law but to fulfill."[10] Tractates on the Gospel of John 7.10.[11]

John Is the Other Disciple Not Mentioned. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He says that one of those who followed him was Andrew, brother of Simon, without mentioning the other. Evidently this is the blessed John himself. He always appears to pass in silence over those things that concern him. And also whenever he relates something concerning himself, he avoids subscribing his name. If those who received the gospel had not indicated the writer with the prefixed title, we would not have known about whom the text is speaking. Commentary on John 1.1.39-41.[12]

Messiah's Fame Has Spread Since the Visit of Magi. Ephrem the Syrian: The statement "We have found the Messiah" affirms that the report about him was circulating and came from the time of the Magi;[13] it was renewed by John who had baptized him, and by the witness of the Spirit. Then he was again left alone in his fast of forty days. For that reason, the souls of the chosen ones were filled with a desire for a report concerning him. They were indeed his instruments, as he said, "You were chosen by me before the world."[14] He chose Galileans, a people without education, whom the prophets proclaimed as "dwellers in darkness,"[15] for they had seen the light, so that he could bring reproach on those who were learned in the law. "For he chose the foolish of the world, so that through them he might put the wise to shame."[16] Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 4.18.[17]

Andrew's Longing for *the* Messiah. Chrysostom: Andrew, after having stayed with Jesus and after having learned what he did, did not keep the treasure to himself but hurries and races to his brother in order to let him know the good things Jesus has shared with him. But why hasn't John mentioned what they talked about? How do we know this is why they "stayed with him"? . . . Observe what Andrew says to his brother, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." You see how, in a short time, he demonstrates not only the persuasiveness of the wise teacher but also his own longing that he had from the beginning. For this word, "we have found," is the expression of a soul that longs for his presence, looking for his coming from above, and is so ecstatic when what he is looking for happens that he hurries to tell others

[7]CSCO 4 3:48-49. [8]Or "master." [9]LF 43:149**. [10]Mt 5:17. [11]FC 78:163*. [12]CSCO 4 3:49. [13]See Mt 2:1-6. [14]See Jn 15:16, 19. [15]Is 9:1. [16]1 Cor 1:27. [17]CB709 add:34.

the good news. This is what brotherly affection, natural friendship, is all about when someone is eager to extend a hand to another when it comes to spiritual matters. Also see how he adds the article, for he does not say "Messiah" but "the Messiah." They were expecting the Christ who would have nothing in common with the others. Homilies on the Gospel of John 19.1.[18]

1:42 *Peter the Rock*

Peter Called Cephas. Augustine: The Evangelist John, again, tells us that before Jesus went into Galilee, Peter and Andrew were with him one day. He also tells us that on that occasion the former had this name, Peter, given to him, while before that he was called Simon. Likewise, John tells us that on the day following, when Jesus now wanted to go up to Galilee, he found Philip and told him to follow him. In this way, too, the Evangelist comes to give the narrative about Nathanael. Further, he informs us that on the third day, when he was yet in Galilee, Jesus brought about the miracle of the turning of the water into wine at Cana. All these incidents are left unrecorded by the other Evangelists, who continue their narratives at once with the statement of the return of Jesus into Galilee. From this, we are to understand that there was an interval here of several days during which those incidents took place in the history of the disciples that are inserted at this point by John. Neither is there anything contradictory here to that other passage where Matthew tells us how the Lord said to Peter, "You are Peter, and on this rock will I build my church."[19] But we are not to understand that that was the time when he first received this name. We are rather to suppose that this took place on the occasion when it was said to him, as John mentions, "You shall be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, 'a rock.'" Thus the Lord could address him at that later period by this very name when he said, "You are Peter." For he does not say then, "You shall be called Peter" but "You are Peter," because on a previous occasion it had already been said, "You shall be called." Harmony of the Gospels 2.17.34.[20]

Building on a Rock. Augustine: Is it a great thing that he changed his name and made him Peter from Simon? Now Peter is from the word for rock, but the rock is the church. Therefore, in the name of Peter the church was represented. And who is secure if not he who builds on a rock? And what does the Lord himself say? "He who hears these words of mine and does them, I shall liken him to a wise man who builds on rock."[21] He does not give in to temptation. . . .

In this way he has drawn your attention. For if Peter had this name before, you would not in that case see the mystery of the rock, and you would think that he was called that name before by chance, not by the providence of God. This is why he wanted him to be called another name first, so that from the very change of name the vital force of the mystery might be commended. Tractates on the Gospel of John 7.14.1-4.[22]

What's in a Name? Chrysostom: Why does he change their names? He does this to show that it was he who gave the old covenant, that it was he who altered names, who called Abram "Abraham," and Sarai "Sarah" and Jacob "Israel." To many he assigned names even from their birth, as with Isaac and Samson, and to those in Isaiah and Hosea.[23] But to others, he gave them their names after they had been named by their parents, like those we have mentioned, as well as Joshua the son of Nun. It was also a custom of the ancients to give names from things, which in fact Leah did.[24] By doing so, the parents have the appellation to remind them of the goodness of God, that a perpetual memory of the prophecy conveyed by the names may sound in the ears of those who receive it. And so too, he named John early,[25]

[18]NPNF 1 14:67**. [19]Mt 16:18. [20]NPNF 1 6:121*. [21]See Mt 7:24. [22]FC 78:167-68*. [23]Is 8:3; Hos 1:4, 6, 9. [24]See Gen 30. [25]Or "from above."

because those whose virtue was to shine forth from their early youth, from that time received their names, while to those who were to become great at a later period, the title also was given later.

But then they each received a different name. Now we all have one name, that which is greater than any. We are called "Christians," and "sons of God," and "friends" and [his] "body." Homilies on the Gospel of John 19.2-3.[26]

[26]NPNF 1 14:68**.

THE CALLING OF PHILIP AND NATHANAEL JOHN 1:43-51

Overview: Jesus encounters thoughtful Philip, who had already been doing some reading in the Law and Prophets, which explains why he so easily followed Jesus. He can immediately relate to his brother Nathanael that this Jesus from Nazareth is the one written about. Jesus' choice of Peter, James and Philip is all the more remarkable when you consider these, his choicest disciples, came from the same region that Nathanael seems to disparage (Chrysostom). Nazareth's reputation was questionable (Theodore), but Nathanael's question still can be taken one of two ways: either as casting aspersions on Jesus' birth and upbringing, or affirming that something good can come out of Nazareth (Augustine). Philip invites him to come and see, knowing not only that seeing is believing, but also that the Word of the Savior had the power to persuade (Cyril of Alexandria). Nathanael, like his brother, was well versed in prophecy (Chrysostom), which is demonstrated in his refusal to make Scripture fit his own interpretation, which is why Jesus commends him (Ephrem). Some, however, like Augustine, have questioned whether he was even one of the Twelve (Augustine).

When our Lord speaks of Nathanael as one in whom there is no guile, he associates him with Jacob, who was described in the same way, thus identifying Nathanael in this and what follows with Jacob, that is, Israel (Augustine). In his divine foreknowledge Jesus saw Nathanael under the fig tree, which elsewhere in Scripture is con-

nected with a curse, as in Eden when Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves (AMBROSE). Jesus was calling Nathanael and all of us to come out from under the fig tree, out from under the curse to the one who cleanses from all sin (AUGUSTINE). Nathanael responds with an affirmation that Jesus is the Son of God, but he could not have known the full implications of what he had said (THEODORE), as Peter later did when he made his confession (CHRYSOSTOM).

The chapter concludes with Jesus asserting a double affirmation in the phrase "Amen, Amen" (AMMONIUS), that what Nathanael has seen today pales in comparison with what is yet to come, since he is not only the King of Israel but also Lord of the angels (CHRYSOSTOM). In this way he offers Nathanael another glimpse of his divinity (THEODORE), while also hearkening back to Jacob, who foresaw Christ in his vision of the angels ascending and descending (AMBROSE). One might also understand the angels as Christ's ministers who ascend by imitation of the Lord, but who must also descend when they preach so that their people, whose understanding is imperfect, can understand the message (AUGUSTINE).

1:43-45 *Philip and Nathanael Follow Jesus*

THE BEST DISCIPLES CHOSEN FROM THE WORST PLACE. CHRYSOSTOM: Having then taken [Peter and the other disciple], Jesus next goes to the capture of the others and draws to him Philip and Nathanael. Now in the case of Nathanael this was not so amazing because the fame of Jesus had gone all over Syria.[1] But it is truly remarkable concerning Peter, James and Philip, that they believed not only before the miracles, but that they did so being from Galilee, out of which "arises no prophet," nor "can any good thing come." The Galileans were somehow of a more boorish and dull disposition than others. But even in this Christ displayed his power. He selected his choicest disciples from a land that bore no fruit. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 20.1.[2]

PHILIP THE THOUGHTFUL CONVERT. CHRYSOSTOM: "To every thoughtful person there is a benefit"[3] . . . and Christ implied more than this when he said, "He that seeks finds."[4] This is why I no longer wonder how it was that Philip followed Christ. Andrew was persuaded when he heard from John, and Peter was persuaded when he heard from Andrew. But Philip, not having learned anything from anyone but Christ who said to him only this, "Follow me," immediately obeyed and did not go back. In fact, he even became a preacher to others. For he ran to Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets wrote." Do you see what a thoughtful mind he had, how assiduously he meditated on the writings of Moses, expecting the advent? For the expression "we have found" belongs always to those who are in some way seeking. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 20.1.[5]

1:46 *Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth?*

THE BAD REPUTATION OF NAZARETH. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: This is not exactly the way this sentence appears, but rather it should be understood in a different and more doubtful sense, as in "How is it possible that anything good comes out of Nazareth?" In fact, among the Jews the name of that village was much despised, because a great number of its inhabitants were pagans, and it seemed impossible that anything good might come out from there. Therefore also the Pharisees said to Nicodemus, "Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee."[6] And so it is only right that Philip says to Nathanael, "Come and see." Since there is now a contrast to that old opinion, [he seems to be saying], I promise to show you the real facts. This was superfluous, otherwise, for someone who had

[1]See Mt 4:24. [2]NPNF 1 14:70**. [3]Prov 14:23 LXX. [4]Mt 7:8. [5]NPNF 1 14:69-70**. [6]Jn 7:52.

once believed in the truth. Commentary on John 1.1.46.[7]

A Question of Doubt or Confirmation. Augustine: [They refer to him as] "Jesus, the son of Joseph." He was called the son of the man to whom his mother had been espoused. For all Christians know well from the Gospel that he was conceived and born while she was still a virgin. But this is what Philip said to Nathanael, and he added the place, "from Nazareth." And Nathanael said to him, "From Nazareth something good can come." What is the meaning here, brothers? Not as some read, for it could be read, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" For the words of Philip follow, who says, "Come and see." But the words of Philip can suitably follow both readings, whether you read it as a confirmation, that is, "from Nazareth something good can come," to which Philip replies, "come and see"; or whether you read it as doubting, making the whole thing into a question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Come and see." Tractates on the Gospel of John 7.15.[8]

Great Things Come Out of Nazareth. Cyril of Alexandria: Nathanael readily agrees that he expects great things to appear out of Nazareth. It is, I suppose, perfectly clear that not only did he take Nazareth as a pledge of what he sought but, bringing together knowledge from Moses and the prophets as one fond of learning, he gained a pretty quick understanding. "Come and see," [Philip] says. Sight will suffice for faith. All you need to do is talk with him, and you will be all the more ready to confess and say without hesitation that he is indeed the expected One. But we must also believe that there was a divine and ineffable grace flowing from the words of our Savior that proved alluring for the souls of his hearers.[9]. . . For since his word is mighty in power, it is also efficacious to persuade. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[10]

1:47 *An Israelite Without Guile*

Nathanael Well Versed in Prophecy. Chrysostom: He praises and approves the man because he had said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And yet, shouldn't have Jesus rather found fault in him? Surely not; for the words are not those of an unbeliever or one deserving blame, but praise. How can you say that? Because Nathanael had considered the writings of the prophets more than Philip. For he had heard from the Scriptures that Christ must come from Bethlehem, and from the village in which David was. This belief at least prevailed among the Jews, and the prophet had proclaimed it of old.[11] . . . And so when he heard that Jesus was "from Nazareth," he was confounded and doubted, not finding the announcement of Philip to agree with the prediction of the prophet. Homilies on the Gospel of John 20.1.[12]

Nathanael Does Not Make Scripture Fit His Interpretation. Ephrem the Syrian: Because the prophet had said that a ruler and governor would arise from Bethlehem,[13] but Nathanael heard that he [our Lord] was from Nazareth, he thus asked,"Can a good leader come forth who is from Nazareth?" For this was not what was written. Thus, when our Lord saw him [Nathanael], he gave excellent testimony about him, that he was not like the scribes who were being deceitful about the readings [from Scripture], striving to establish their interpretations according to their own will. He said,"This is a scribe of Israel in whom no deceit is seen," because before he knew [our Lord], he asked if Nazareth could bring forth a leader as Bethlehem [was able]. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 4.19.[14]

---

[7]CSCO 4 3:51-52. [8]NPNF 1 7:53**. [9]Lk 4:22. [10]LF 43:152-53**. Cyril believes that there was a false idea prevalent among the Jews at the time that the Messiah would come from Nazareth. This explains his positive assessment of Nathanael's remarks. [11]He quotes Mt 2:6; Mic 5:2. [12]NPNF 1 14:70**. [13]Mic 5:2. [14]CB709 add:34-36.

Was Nathanael One of the Twelve? Augustine: "Behold, truly an Israelite in whom there is no guile" is something said neither to Andrew, nor Peter nor to Philip. It was said to Nathanael. . . . What do we make of it then, brothers? Ought he to have been first among the apostles? Not only is he not found to be first among the apostles, but Nathanael is neither in the middle nor last among the Twelve, Nathanael, to whom the Son of God bore such great witness, saying, "Behold, truly an Israelite in whom there is no guile."

Is the reason asked? As far as the Lord makes known, we find a probable answer. For we ought to understand that Nathanael himself was educated and skilled in the law. Therefore the Lord did not wish to place him among the disciples because he chose unlearned men whereby he might confound the world. [15] Tractates on the Gospel of John 7.16.2-17.2.[16]

1:48 *How Do You Know Me?*

The Connection Between Nathanael and Jacob. Augustine: Now Jacob had been called in Scripture a man without guile. Jacob himself, as you know, was surnamed Israel. That is why in the Gospel, when the Lord saw Nathanael, he said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile." And that Israelite, not yet knowing who was speaking to him, replied, "How do you know me?" And the Lord said to him, "While you were under the fig tree I saw you," as though to say, "While you were under the shadow of sin, I predestined you." And Nathanael, remembering he had been under the fig tree where the Lord had not been, recognized the divinity in him and answered, "You are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel." Though he was under the fig tree, he did not become a withered fig tree; he acknowledged Christ. And the Lord said to him, "Because I said, While you were under the fig tree I saw you, is that why you believe? You shall see greater things than that."

What are these greater things? "Amen, I tell you." Because that man is an Israelite in whom there is no guile, look back to Jacob, in whom there is no guile, and recollect, when Jesus tells you, the stone at his head, the vision in his sleep, the stairs from earth to heaven, the beings coming down and going up; and then see what the Lord says to the Israelite without guile: "You shall see heaven opened"—listen, guileless Nathanael, to what guileless Jacob saw—"and angels going up and coming down"—to whom?—"to the Son of man." Sermon 89.5.[17]

The Fig Tree and Worldliness. Ambrose: Would that Jesus would cast a glance on me still lying under that barren fig tree, and that my fig tree might also after three years bear fruit.[18] But how can sinners have that kind of hope? If only that gospel dresser of the vineyard, perhaps already bidden to cut down my fig tree, would at least let it alone this year also, until he digs around it and fertilizes it so that he may by some chance lift the helpless out of the dust and lift the poor out of the mire.[19] . . . The fig tree, that is, the tempting attraction of the pleasures of the world, still overshadows me, low in height, brittle for working, soft for use and barren of fruit. Concerning Virgins 1.1.3-4.[20]

He First Saw You in the Shadow of Sin. Augustine: You know from what the first sinners, Adam and Eve, made themselves aprons. When they had sinned, they made themselves aprons from fig leaves and covered their shameful parts, because it was by sinning that they caused themselves to feel shame about them. So if the first sinners made themselves aprons, the couple from whom we derive our origins, in whom we

[15]Augustine does not number Nathanael among the twelve since his name is not found in the lists in Mt 10:3, Mk 3:18 or Lk 6:14, although many have assumed that he is Bartholomew, who by the nature of his name being a patronymic, would also have had another name. Augustine must also take into account Jn 21:2, where Nathanael is listed in the company of the Twelve. [16]FC 78:169-70*. [17]*WSA* 3 3:443-44*. [18]Lk 13:6. [19]See Ps 113:6 (112:6 LXX). [20]NPNF 2 10:363-64*.

had gotten lost so that he would come to seek and to save what had gotten lost—if they made them out of fig leaves to cover their shameful parts, what else could it mean, "When you were under the fig tree I saw you," but "You would not have come to the cleanser of sin unless he had first seen you in the shadow of sin"? In order for us to see, we have been seen; in order for us to love, we have been loved. Sermon 174.4.[21]

1:49 *Rabbi, Son of God, King of Israel*

Nathanael's Knowledge of Christ Still Imperfect. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Therefore Nathanael, convinced by those deeds, said to him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the king of Israel," that is, you are the Messiah who was already announced. The Messiah was certainly expected by them as God to appear before everybody, as a king of Israel, even though they conceived him in a more obscure and material way. It was not possible then that the Jews knew how he was the Son of God or the king of Israel. Evidently also Nathanael did not say he was the Son of God by divine generation but by familiarity, as those people who came to God through his virtue were called sons of God. It was not possible that Nathanael immediately knew what we see and that the apostles themselves came to know after a long time. Those things that were said to him by the Lord could not be sufficient to demonstrate his other nature. Commentary on John 1.1.49.[22]

Nathanael's Confession Compared with Peter's Later Confession. Chrysostom: Many, when they read this passage, are perplexed at finding that Peter was pronounced blessed for having, after our Lord's miracles and teaching, confessed him to be the Son of God. Nathanael, who makes the same confession before Peter, receives no such blessing. The reason is this: Peter and Nathanael both used the same words but not in the same way. Peter confessed our Lord to be the Son of God, in the sense of him being very God. Nathanael confessed him to be the Son of God only as a mere man. For after saying, "You are the Son of God," he adds, "You are the King of Israel." But the Son of God was not only the King of Israel but of the whole world.

This is clear from what follows. For in the case of Peter, Christ added nothing, but, as if his faith were already perfect, told him that he would build the church on his confession. In the case of Nathanael, he treats his confession as deficient and needing to progress further upwards. Homilies on the Gospel of John 21.1.[23]

1:50-51 *Greater Things Than These*

"Amen, Amen" Means You Have Been Found Trustworthy. Ammonius: Sometimes our Savior said "amen" once, at other times twice, when he wished to confirm what he was saying. This is a Hebrew manner of speaking, revealing that which was taking place, such as that "you have been found trustworthy" so as to see "the heavens opened," and so on. He says that it is possible to see the heavens opened not in a manner open to the senses but only by a mind observing the angels coming to serve Jesus. The word *amen* is used instead of "really and truthfully" and is more fitting here. Fragments on John 53.[24]

The Lord of Angels. Chrysostom: Do you see how he leads him up little by little from the earth and causes him no longer to imagine him as merely a man? For one to whom angels minister and on whom angels ascend and descend, how could he be a man? This is why he said, "You shall see greater things than these." And to prove this, he introduces the ministry of angels. What he means is something like this: Does this, O Nathanael, seem to you a great matter, and have you for this confessed me to be King of Israel? What then will you say when you see "angels

[21]*WSA* 3 5:260. See also *Sermon* 122.1. [22]CSCO 4 3:53. [23]NPNF 1 14:72-73**. [24]*JKGK* 210.

ascending and descending on me"? He persuades him by these words to receive him as Lord also of the angels. For on him as on the king's own son, the royal ministers ascended and descended, once at the season of the crucifixion, again at the time of the resurrection and the ascension, and before this also, when they "came and ministered to him."[25] They also ascended and descended when they proclaimed the good news of his birth and cried, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,"[26] when they came to Mary and also when they came to Joseph. . . .

Our Lord made the present a proof of the future. After the powers he had already shown, Nathanael would readily believe that much more would follow. Homilies on the Gospel of John 21.1.[27]

Jesus Gives Nathanael a Hint of His Real Nature. Theodore of Mopsuestia: The Lord shows that nothing he had said was so great or sufficient enough to demonstrate all of what he really was. So then he declares what the greater things are that Nathanael would have seen. . . . He spoke of angels ascending and descending on him, because they assist him in dealing with the whole of creation. Commentary on John 1.1.50-51.[28]

Jacob Foresaw Christ on Earth. Ambrose: Jacob set out and slept—evidence of tranquility of spirit—and saw angels of God ascending and descending.[29] This means he foresaw Christ on earth; the band of angels was descending to Christ and ascending to him, so as to render service to their rightful master in loving service. Jacob and the Happy Life 2.4.16.[30]

Preachers Ascend by Imitation of Christ and Descend by Preaching. Augustine: There is something greater than "I saw you under the fig tree." [Jesus said, "We shall see greater things than these,"] because it is a greater thing that our Lord has justified us, whom he has called, than that he saw us lying under the shadow of death. For what profit would it have been to us if we had remained where he saw us? Should we not be lying there? And so, what is this greater thing? When have we seen angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man? . . .

Good preachers who preach Christ are like angels of God; that is, they ascend and descend on the Son of man. . . . Take for instance Paul, who ascended to the third heaven[31] . . . and descended so far that he even gave milk to babies.[32] . . . Take for instance the father who is well skilled in speaking, who is such an orator that the forum resounds with his eloquence and the judgment seats shake—if he has a little son, on his return home he puts aside the forensic eloquence to which he had ascended and in child's language descends to his little one. . . . If the Lord himself ascended and descended, it is evident that his preachers ascend by imitation and descend by preaching. Tractates on the Gospel of John 7.22-23.[33]

---

[25]Mt 4:11. [26]Lk 2:14. [27]NPNF 1 14:73**. [28]CSCO 4 3:54. [29]Gen 28:10-12. [30]FC 65:155-56*. [31]2 Cor 12:2-4. [32]1 Cor 3:1-2. [33]NPNF 1 7:56-57**.

JESUS INVITED TO A WEDDING WITH HIS DISCIPLES AND MOTHER JOHN 2:1-4

Overview: Christ, as a servant, attends his servants' wedding (Chrysostom) held in Galilee of the Gentiles rather than Jerusalem or elsewhere in Judea (Cyril of Alexandria). He thus fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah (Eusebius). According to the chronology in John, the wedding was held three days after his baptism (Theodore of Mopsuestia). On the third day, that is, in the last times, the Word descends to earth to consummate his marriage to our human nature, which he heals (Theodore of Heraclea). The third day also signifies the Trinity, while the miracle Christ performs at the wedding is a foretaste of the dowry of his blood, which Jesus will give for his bride (Caesarius). Jesus accepts this wedding invitation as an opportunity to confirm his institution of marriage (Origen) portending his own wedding to the church (Augustine). His presence sanctifies the institution of marriage (Maximus of Turin) and annuls the Genesis curse (Cyril of Alexandria).

When the wine runs out, Mary turns to Jesus expecting a miracle—but from where did she get such an idea since this was the first miracle John relates to us (Romanus)? Perhaps she also was hoping for some recognition for her son (Theodore of Mopsuestia). But Jesus rebukes Mary for her request, even as he still loved and respected her (Chrysostom). We also get a glimpse of the divine nature in this rebuke, however (Ammonius, Augustine). He rebukes her because of her focus on the physical wine when he has in mind the wine of our redemption (Maximus of Turin) as he waits for the hour known only by his Father (Irenaeus). The miracle was not done out of necessity but rather to manifest his glory, which would only be fully manifested when his hour had come on the cross. (Augustine). As the creator of time, Christ knew what the most appropriate hour would be for him to accomplish his work, but he also honored his mother and so performed the miracle at the proper time (Romanus).

2:1 *A Wedding at Cana*

The Servant Attends His Servants' Wedding. Chrysostom: Since our Lord was known in Galilee, they invite him to the marriage. And he comes because he cares more about our good than his own dignity. The one who did not despise taking on himself the form of a servant[1] would much less despise being present at the marriage of servants. Homilies on the Gospel of John 21.1.[2]

The Wedding Held in Galilee. Cyril of Alexandria: The wedding was not held in Jerusalem but outside of Judea, as it were, in the country of the Gentiles—"Galilee of the Gentiles,"[3] as the prophet said. It is, I suppose, altogether obvious that the synagogue of the Jews rejected the Bridegroom from heaven and that

[1]Phil 2:7. [2]NPNF 1 14:73**. [3]Is 9:1.

the church of the Gentiles [gladly] received him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[4]

The First Miracle in Galilee of the Gentiles. Eusebius of Caesarea: Consider whether this first miracle of our Savior that took place in Cana of Galilee, where he changed water into wine, is not foretold in the beginning of this prophecy where it says, "Drink this first. Act quickly, land of Zebulun and Naphtali, Galilee of the Gentiles."[5] And this miracle was a sign of the mystic wine—that wine of the faith of the new covenant that is transformed from bodily joy to a joy of mind and spirit. Proof of the Gospel 9.8.8.[6]

The Wedding Happens Three Days after Jesus' Baptism. Theodore of Mopsuestia: It is evident that this third day should be calculated as the third day after the baptism. He said that the first day was that in which Andrew and his companion followed him and then passed the night with him. The second day relates the events concerning Philip and Nathanael. The third day points to the events of this wedding party. Clearly all these events took place in Galilee. Immediately after his baptism he left and lived there. Commentary on John 1.2.1.[7]

An Eschatological Wedding on the Third Day. Theodore of Heraclea: According to the *theoria*[8] [of this passage], the Word of God descended from heaven in order that the bridegroom, having made the punishment of the human nature his own, might persuade [his bride] to become pregnant with the spiritual seed of wisdom. He convened the wedding on the third day, that is, in the last times of the age. For he struck the transgression that was in Adam and again bandaged us on the third day, that is, in the last times when, becoming human for us he took on the whole fleshly nature that he resurrected in himself from the dead. Therefore, because of this [John] mentions the third as the day when he consecrated the wedding. Fragments on John 12.[9]

The Dowry of His Kingdom Awaits. Caesarius of Arles: The third day is the mystery of the Trinity, while the miracles of the nuptials are the mysteries of heavenly joys. It was both a nuptial day and a feast for this reason, because the church after the redemption was joined to the spouse who was coming—to that spouse, I say, whom all the ages from the beginning of the world had promised. It is he who came down to earth to invite his beloved to marriage with his highness, giving her for a present the token of his blood and intending to give later the dowry of his kingdom. Sermon 167.1.[10]

2:2 *Jesus Was Invited to the Wedding*

The Maker of Man and Woman Does Not Refuse the Invitation. Origen: The third day was now come from Jesus' baptism, and there was a marriage taking place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there when, on the failure of the wine, he made wine out of water. . . . Jesus being Maker of man and woman does not refuse to be called to a marriage; it was he who after forming Eve brought her to Adam. Therefore in the Gospel he says about this union, "What God has joined together let no man put asunder."[11] Let the heretics therefore be put to shame who reject marriage, since Jesus was called to a marriage and his mother was there. Fragment 28 on the Gospel of John.[12]

The Word Was the Bridegroom. Augustine: The Lord was invited and came to a wedding. Is it any wonder that he who came to that house for a wedding came to this world for a wedding? . . . Therefore he has a bride here whom he has redeemed by his blood and to whom he has given the Holy Spirit as a pledge.[13] He wrested her from enslavement to the devil, he died for her

[4]LF 43:158**. [5]Is 9:1 LXX. [6]*POG* 2:170-71**. [7]CSCO 4 3:55. [8]A technical term for the insight into the vision of God the passage provides. [9]*JKGK* 67-68. [10]FC 47:402-3. [11]Mt 19:6. [12]*AEG* 2:7; GCS 10(4):505. [13]See 2 Cor 1:22.

sins. He arose again for her justification. Who will offer such great things to his bride? Men may offer some trinkets or other from the earth such as gold, silver, precious stones, horses, slaves, farms or estates. Will anyone offer his blood? For if he gives his blood to his bride, he will not be alive to take her as his wife. But the Lord, dying free of anxiety, gave his blood for her in order that when he arose, he might have her whom he had already joined to himself in the womb of the Virgin. For the Word was the bridegroom, and human flesh was the bride. And both are the one Son of God and likewise the Son of man. That womb of the Virgin Mary where he became the head of the church was his bridal chamber. He came forth from there like the bridegroom from his bridal chamber, as Scripture foretold: "And he, as a bridegroom coming forth from his bridal chamber, has rejoiced as a giant to run the way."[14] He came forth from the bridal chamber like a bridegroom; and having been invited, he came to the wedding. Tractates on the Gospel of John 8.4.1-3.[15]

Marriage Sanctified by Christ's Presence. Maximus of Turin: The Son of God went to the wedding so that marriage, which had been instituted by his own authority, might be sanctified by his blessed presence. He went to a wedding of the old order when he was about to take a new bride for himself through the conversion of the Gentiles, a bride who would forever remain a virgin. He went to a wedding even though he himself was not born of human wedlock. He went to the wedding not, certainly, to enjoy a banquet but rather to make himself known by miracles. He went to the wedding not to drink wine but to give it. Sermon 23.[16]

The Curse Annulled. Cyril of Alexandria: As one who was renewing and refashioning the very nature of humanity for the better, Christ not only imparts his blessing to those already called into being but also prepares grace in advance for those soon to be born and sanctifies their entrance into existence. And yet, there is still another reason why Jesus was at this wedding. God had said to the woman . . . "in pain you shall bring forth children."[17] How else could we escape a condemned marriage unless this curse was annulled? This curse too the Savior removes because of his love for humankind. For he who is the delight and joy of all honored marriage with his presence so that he might expel the ancient sadness of childbearing. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[18]

2:3 *Mary Tells Jesus They Have No Wine*

Why Does Mary Expect a Miracle?
Romanus Melodus:

When Christ was present at the marriage feast, and the crowd of guests were faring sumptuously,
The supply of wine failed them, and their joy was turned into distress;
The bridegroom was upset; the cupbearers muttered unceasingly;
There was this one sad display of penury,
And there was no small clamor in the room.
Recognizing it, the all-holy Mary
Came at once and said to her son: "They have no wine,
But I beg you, my son, show that you can do all things,
Thou who has in wisdom created all things."

We beg of you, holy Virgin, from what sort of miracles did you know
How your son would be able to offer wine when He had not harvested the grapes
And had never before worked wonders, as John, inspired of God wrote?[19]
Teach us, how, when you had never gazed upon
And never made trial of His miracles,

[14]See Ps 19:5 (18:6 LXX, Vg). [15]FC 78:182-83*. See also Bede *Homily* 1.14 on the Gospels (CS 110:135). [16]*JFC* 72; PL 57:274. See also Gregory *Oration* 40.18. [17]Gen 3:16. [18]LF 43:155**. [19]Jn 2:11.

How did you summon Him to this miracle?
For the question now posed to us in this matter is not simple,
As to how you said to your son: "Give them wine,"
He who has in wisdom created all things.

Let us learn the word which the mother of the God of all said to us:
"Listen," she said, "my friends, instruct yourselves and know the mystery;
I have seen my son working miracles even before this miracle.[20] . . .

"For I know that I did not know a husband,
And I bore a son—beyond natural law and reason,
And I know that I remained a virgin as I had been.
Do you, O man, ask for a miracle greater than this birth?
Gabriel came to me saying how this one would be born,
He who has in wisdom created all things.

"After my conception, I myself saw Elizabeth call me Mother of God before the actual birth;[21] after the birth, Simeon praised me in song;[22]
Anna greeted me with joy;[23] the Magi from Persia hastened to the manger,
For a heavenly star proclaimed the birth in advance;
Shepherds with angels heralded joy,
And creation rejoiced with them.
What would I be able to ask for greater than these miracles?
Indeed from them I have faith that it is my son
Who has in wisdom created all things."

Kontakion on the Marriage at Cana 7.5-9.[24]

Mary Wants Her Son to Reveal Himself. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Perhaps his mother, as mothers do, incited him to perform a miracle, wishing that the greatness of her son would be revealed—and thinking that the lack of wine offered the right occasion for the miracle. Commentary on the Gospel of John 1.2.3.[25]

2:4 *Woman, What Have You to Do with Me?*

Jesus Always Honored His Mother. Chrysostom: We know from the Gospel of St. Luke that Jesus greatly honored his mother since he tells us that Jesus was subject to his parents.[26] . . . For where parents throw no obstacle in the way of God's commands, it is our duty to be subject to them. But when they demand anything at an unseasonable time or cut us off from spiritual things, we should not be deceived into compliance. Homilies on the Gospel of John 21.2.[27]

God Does Not Need Reminding. Ammonius: He chides his mother for having importunely reminded God, who has no need to be reminded of anything. It is as if he had said, "Do not regard me only as a man but also as God. Not yet has the time of my manifestation come. Not as yet is it known who I am." Fragments on John 57.[28]

Jesus' Rebuke of Mary Evidences His Divinity. Augustine: Although the Evangelist himself mentions Jesus' mother by her very name, Jesus nevertheless addresses her with the words "Woman, what have I to do with you?" But here he is not pushing her away from himself since he had received flesh from her. Rather, his purpose is to convey the conception of his divinity, which is especially appropriate at this time when he is about to change the water into wine. This is the divinity that had made that "woman" [Mary] rather than being made in her. Harmony of the Gospels 4.10.11.[29]

[20]Since Cana is the first public miracle, then Mary, through Romanus, may be referring to some of the stories about the infant Christ in the apocryphal Gospels. [21]Lk 1:42. [22]Lk 2:25. [23]Lk 2:36-38. [24]*KRBM* 1:69-71*. [25]CSCO 4 3:56. [26]Lk 2:51. [27]NPNF 1 14:74**. [28]*JKGK* 211. [29]NPNF 1 6:232**.

Jesus' Concern Is with the Wine of Our Redemption. Maximus of Turin: The most blessed Mary said to him, "They have no wine." Jesus answered as though he were displeased. "Woman," he said, "is that my concern or yours?" It can hardly be doubted that these were words of displeasure. However, this I think was only because his mother mentioned to him so casually the lack of earthly wine, when he had come to offer the peoples of the whole world the new chalice of eternal salvation. By his reply, "My hour has not yet come," he was foretelling the most glorious hour of his passion and the wine of our redemption, which would obtain life for all. Mary was asking for a temporal favor, but Christ was preparing joys that would be eternal. Nevertheless, the Lord in his goodness did not refuse this small grace while greater graces awaited. Sermon 23.[30]

Jesus Knows to Wait for the Hour Foreknown by the Father. Irenaeus: With [Jesus], nothing is incomplete or done at the wrong time, just as with the Father there is nothing haphazard. The Lord checked Mary's untimely haste when she was urging him to perform the wonderful miracle of the wine and wanting him to partake of the cup, which would have so much emblematic significance later on. This is why he said, "Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour is not yet come"—waiting for the hour that was foreknown by the Father. Against Heresies 3.16.7.[31]

Crucifixion Is the Hour Yet to Come. Augustine: There is . . . nothing that would compel us to deny the mother of the Lord occasioned by the words spoken by him, "Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour is not yet come."[32] Rather, he admonishes us to understand that, in respect of his being God, there was no mother for him. [When he spoke to her] it was as he was preparing to demonstrate of his personal majesty[33] in the turning of water into wine. But as regards his being crucified, he was crucified in respect of his being man. And that was the hour that had not come as yet. On Faith and the Creed 4.9.[34]

The Creator of Time Is Not Subject to Time. Romanus Melodus:

But Christ, seeing His mother saying, "Grant me this request,"
At once said to her: "What do you wish, woman, my hour has not come."
Certain men made use of this saying as a pretext for impiety;
They said that Christ submitted to necessity,
They said that He was a slave to periods of time.[35] . . .

"Now answer, my child," said the all-holy mother of Christ,
"Thou who dost control with measurement the periods of time, how, my son and Lord, dost Thou await *a* time?
Thou who hast regulated the division of the seasons, how dost thou await *a* season?
Thou who art the creator of the visible and the invisible,
Thou who, as master, dost day and night regulate
The ceaseless revolutions, as Thou dost will them—
Thou who hast defined the years in beautifully ordered cycles—
How, then, dost Thou await a time for the miracle which I ask of Thee
Who hast in wisdom created all things?"

"I knew before you told me, revered Virgin, that the wine was just beginning to give out for them,"
The Ineffable and Merciful straightway answered His holy mother.

---

[30]PL 57:274-75. [31]SC 211:314; ANF 1:443**. [32]The Manichaeans used this passage to deny that Jesus had an earthly mother. [33]Lat *cuius majestatis personam.* [34]NPNF 1 3:325*; CSEL 41:12. [35]The same objection is taken up by John of Damascus (PG 59:134).

"I know all the concerns of your heart which you set in motion in this matter;
For within yourself you reasoned as follows:
'Necessity now summons my son to a miracle,
And He puts it off under the pretext of "the time." '
Holy mother, learn now the meaning of the delay,
For when you know it, I shall grant you this favor,
I, who in wisdom have created all things.

Kontakion on the Marriage at Cana 7.10-12.[36]

There Is a Proper Order to All Things. Romanus Melodus:

"At the time when I brought forward Heaven and Earth and all things from a state of nonexistence,
I would have been quite able at that time to arrange in order at once all that I had produced;
But I introduced a certain well-regulated order.
Creation was accomplished in six days—
Not that I did not have the power,
But in order that the chorus of angels, seeing what I did, each deed in turn,
Would deify me, singing a hymn: 'Glory to Thee, Powerful One,
Who hast in wisdom created all things.' . . .

"Mark what I say, holy one; for at this time I was willing first
To announce to the Israelites and to teach them the hope of faith,
In order that in the presence of miracles they might learn thoroughly who has sent me,
And that they might know with certainty the glory of my Father,
And his will, for He desires that in every way
I be glorified along with Him by all.
For what He who engendered me has done, these things I also do,
Since I am consubstantial with Him and His Spirit,
I, who have in wisdom created all things.

"For if they had understood all these things at the time when they saw the awesome miracles,
They would understand that I am God before time, even though I have become man.
But now, contrary to order, before the teaching, you have asked for miracles;
And it is for this reason that I delayed a short time in answer to you:
If I was waiting for the time to perform miracles,
It was for this reason alone.
But, since it is necessary that parents be honored by their children,
I shall pay observance to you, Mother, for I am able to do all things,
I, who have in wisdom created all things."

Kontakion on the Marriage at Cana 7.13-16.[37]

[36]*KRBM* 1:71-72*. [37]*KRBM* 1:72-73*.

The Miracle of Water Becoming Wine: The First Sign John 2:5-11

Overview: Jesus grants his mother's request in order to show both that he honors his mother (Bede) and that he was not governed by fate. The jars used were for purification which meant they would have been thoroughly cleaned; there could be no deception in how the miracle was accomplished (Chrysostom). These jars also symbolize the womb of the virgin in which Jesus had been conceived and that had also witnessed a transformation of nature. As a king coming to his own banquet, Christ not only brings his own wine but also pours it for his guests as a servant (Ephrem). He makes his own wine of the gospel out of the water of the Law and Prophets which, without Christ, have no taste (Augustine). The one who created water out of nothing could change that same water into wine (Maximus of Turin). The detail the Evangelist John provides proves the genuineness of the miracle (Theodore) as the miracle gradually unfolds before all those who witness it, culminating in the witness who could best testify to what had happened, that is, the steward in charge of the wedding who judged the wine superior (Chrysostom). Such superior and abundant wine proved also to be a generous wedding present for the new couple (Theodore).

Jesus uses his power only for a purpose (Ephrem). Changing water into wine is a miracle that goes beyond the senses and thus manifests the power of God (Hilary). Jesus chose appropriate witnesses who could testify to the miracle and to the quality of the wine (Chrysostom). The miracle proved Jesus' sonship (Maximus of Turin) and that he was the King of glory prophesied in the Psalms (Bede). Changing water into wine is no different from changing wine into blood (Cyril of Jerusalem), and so we continue to celebrate the mystery of the changed wine in the church's banquet today (Romanus).

2:5 *Do Whatever He Tells You*

Jesus Honors His Mother in Doing What She Asks. Chrysostom: Why, after he had said, "My hour has not yet come," and denied his mother's initial request, did he do what his mother told him to do? The main reason was so that those who opposed him and thought that he was under subjection to the "hour" might have sufficient proof that he was subject to no hour. For if he was, how could he have done this miracle before the hour appointed for it? He also wished to show honor to his mother and let it eventually become evident, in the company of so many, that he had not contradicted the woman

who had bore him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 22.1.[1]

Honor Your Father and Mother. Bede: He would not dishonor his mother, since he orders us to honor our father and mother. Homilies on the Gospels 1.14.[2]

2:6 *Stone Jars for Purification*

Jars for Purification, Not Deception. Chrysostom: There was a reason why the Evangelist says, "After the manner of the purifying of the Jews." [He said this] so that none of the unbelievers might suspect that lees had been left in the vessel and then water was poured upon them and mixed with them in order to make a very weak wine. Therefore he says, "After the manner of the purifying of the Jews," to show that those vessels were never receptacles for wine. Palestine is an arid country with few fountains or wells. They used to fill water pots with water so that they would not always have to go to the rivers if they became defiled, but rather could have the means of purification readily at hand. Homilies on the Gospel of John 22.2.[3]

Changed Water in Jars Symbolizes Changed Nature in Womb. Ephrem the Syrian: Why did our Lord change nature at the beginning of his signs, if it was not to show that the divinity that changed nature in the interior of the jars was the same that changed nature in the womb of the virgin? And at the conclusion of the signs, he opened the tomb to show that the insatiable nature of death would not keep hold of him; he confirmed and ratified these two uncertainties of his birth and of his death. As to their nature, these waters were turned into the [fruit of] the vine; their stone vessels were not changed within their own nature. They were a symbol of his body, which was wonderfully conceived in a woman, and in a marvelous way by [the intervention of] no man within the virgin. He thus made wine out of water to teach about the manner of his conception and birth. He called upon the six jars as witness to the one virgin who gave birth to him; for the jars conceived in a unique way that was not customary for them, and they brought forth wine, and then they did not continue to produce [it]. Thus did the virgin conceive and give birth to Immanuel, and then she ceased and did not continue [to give birth]. The offspring of the jars was from smallness to grandeur, and from vileness to excellence, for from water came good wine. In this case [the birth from the virgin], however, it was from grandeur to weakness and from glory to contempt. Yet in the case of these jars, they were for the purification of the Jews, and our Lord poured his instruction into them, to teach that he came in the way [found in] the Law and the Prophets, and he transformed everything by his teaching, just as wine [was made] from water. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 5.6-7.[4]

2:7 *Fill the Jars with Water*

The King Pours His Wine for the Guests. Ephrem the Syrian:

Let Cana thank you for gladdening her
  banquet!
The bridegroom's crown exalted you for
  exalting it,
And the bride's crown belonged to your
  victory.
In her mirror allegories are expounded and
  traced,
For you portrayed your church in the bride,
And in her guests, yours are traced,
And in her magnificence she portrays your
  advent.
Let the feast thank him, for in multiplying his
  wine
Six miracles were beheld there:

[1]NPNF 1 14:77**. [2]CS 110:137. [3]NPNF 1 14:77. Caesarius of Arles finds an analogy between the water jars and baptism, *Sermon* 167.1 (FC 47:402-9). [4]CB709 add: 40-42.

The six wine jugs set aside for water
Into which they invited the King to pour his wine.
Hymns on Virginity 33.1-2.[5]

The Wine of Christ from the Water of the Law and Prophets. Augustine: When these words of the Gospel, which are certainly clear, are understood, all those mysteries that lie hidden in this miracle of the Lord will be opened. . . . He omitted none of the ancient Scriptures, that is, the water, and for that reason they were called senseless by the Lord because they still tasted water, not wine. But how did he make wine from water? When he opened their understanding to them and explained the Scriptures to them, beginning with Moses through all the prophets. Now, intoxicated by this, they said, "Was not our heart burning on the road when he opened to us the Scriptures?"[6] For they understood Christ in these books in which they had not known him.

Therefore our Lord, Jesus Christ, changed water into wine; and what was tasteless acquires taste, what was not intoxicating intoxicates. For if he has ordered the water poured out of them and so himself put in wine from the secret hollows of creation from which he also created the bread when he satisfied so many thousands . . . thus he could have also, after the water had been poured out, poured in wine. But if he had done this, he would have seemed to have repudiated the old Scripture.

But when he turned the water itself into wine, he showed us that the ancient Scripture comes from him too; for by his order the jars were filled. This Scripture, too, is indeed from the Lord. But it has no taste if Christ is not understood in it. Tractates on the Gospel of John 9.5.1-3.[7]

The Transformation Testifies to the Creator. Maximus of Turin: Addressing the expectant servants, he said, "Fill the jars with water." The servants promptly obeyed, and suddenly in a marvelous way the water began to acquire potency, take on color, emit fragrance and gain flavor—all at once it changed its nature completely! Now this transformation of the water from its own substance into another testified to the powerful presence of the Creator. Only he who had made it out of nothing could change water into something whose use was quite different. Dearly beloved, have no doubt that he who changed water into wine is the same as he who from the beginning has thickened it into snow and hardened it into ice. It is he who changed it into blood for the Egyptians and bade it flow from the dry rock for the thirsty Hebrews—the rock that, newly transformed into a spring, was like a mother's breast refreshing with its gentle flow a countless multitude of people. Sermon 23.[8]

"Up to the Brim." Theodore of Mopsuestia: He did not add "up to the brim" without reason, but so that the suspicion might not arise that if there had only been a little bit of water, the wine had been mixed [with it] and that he, by cheating their taste, had just simulated the change of the water into wine. Those who drew the wine [from the jars] also distributed it.[9] Commentary on John 1.2.6-7.[10]

2:8 *The Wine Taken to the Steward of the Feast*

The Miracle Gradually Unfolds. Chrysostom: Our Lord wanted the power of his miracles to be seen gradually, little by little. And, if the servants had related what had happened they would have been thought mad in testifying to something that was done by someone who at the time appeared to be a mere man. Although they knew for certain what they had experienced (for it was unlikely that they would disbelieve their

[5]ESH 407-8. [6]Lk 24:32. [7]FC 78:198-99*. For a similar interpretation, see Caesarius of Arles *Sermon* 168.4 (FC 47:410-11). [8]PL 57:275-76. See also Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.11.5. [9]Another proof that there was no deception on Jesus' part. [10]CSCO 4 3:57.

own hands), yet that would have been insufficient to convince anyone else. And so Jesus did not reveal it to everyone but to the one who was best able to understand what had happened, reserving a clearer understanding of what had happened for a later time. . . . And [he had made] not just any wine, but the best wine. Homilies on the Gospel of John 22.2.[11]

Wine for the Couple's Future. Theodore of Mopsuestia: According to the will of the one who gave the command, the water was changed into wine, slaking the thirst of those who drank but also providing wine more abundantly for the couple's future. Commentary on John 1.2.6-7.[12]

2:9 *The Water Now Become Wine*

Jesus Uses His Power for a Purpose. Ephrem the Syrian: He who did not want to change stones changed water at Cana. Hymns on Virginity 14.11.[13]

Miracle Beyond the Senses Manifests the Power of God. Hilary of Poitiers: On the wedding day in Galilee, water was made wine. Do we have appropriate words or senses to ascertain what methods produced the change by which the tastelessness of water disappeared and was replaced by the full flavor of wine? It was not a mixing; it was a creation, and a creation that was not a beginning but a transformation. A weaker liquid was not obtained by admixture of a stronger element; an existing entity perished, and a new entity came into being. The bridegroom was anxious, the household in confusion, the harmony of the marriage feast imperiled. Jesus is asked for help. He does not get up or busy himself. He does the work without any effort. Water is poured into the vessels, wine drawn out in the cups. The evidence of the senses of the pourer contradicts that of the one who draws it out. Those who poured expect water to be drawn; those who draw out think that wine must have been poured in. The intervening time cannot account for any gain or loss of character in the liquid. The mode of action baffles sight and sense, but the power of God is manifest in the result achieved. On the Trinity 3.5.[14]

2:10 *The Steward of the Feast Called the Bridegroom*

Jesus Chooses Appropriate Witnesses. Chrysostom: That it was wine then, and the best of wine that had been made, not the servants only, but the bridegroom and the steward of the feast would testify. Those who drew the water would testify that it was made by Christ. Thus, although the miracle was not revealed right at that moment, yet in the end it could not be passed by in silence since so many and such convincing testimonies had been provided by Christ for the future. The servants were witnesses that Jesus had made the water wine. The steward of the feast and the bridegroom [could testify] that the wine that was made was good. Homilies on the Gospel of John 22.3.[15]

2:11 *The Disciples Believe in Jesus*

The Miracle Proves the Sonship of Jesus. Maximus of Turin: It was not what they saw happening that the disciples believed but what could not be seen by bodily eyes. They did not believe that Jesus Christ was the son of the Virgin—that was something they knew. Rather, they believed that he was the only Son of the Most High, as this miracle proved. And so let us too believe wholeheartedly that he whom we confess to be the Son of man is also the Son of God. Let us believe not only that he shared our nature but also that he was consubstantial with the Father; for as a man he was present at the wedding, and as God he changed the water into wine. If such is our faith, the Lord will give us also to drink of the sobering wine of his grace. Sermon 23.[16]

[11]NPNF 1 14:78**. [12]CSCO 4 3:57. [13]ESH 323. [14]NPNF 2 9:63*. [15]NPNF 1 14:78**. [16]PL 57:276.

The Miracle Manifests the King of Glory. Bede: By this sign he made manifest that he was the King of glory,[17] and so the church's bridegroom. He came to the marriage as a common human being, but as Lord of heaven and earth he could convert the elements as he wished. How beautifully appropriate it is that when he began the signs that he would show to mortals while he was still mortal he turned water into wine. [But] when he had become immortal through his resurrection, he began the signs that he would show only to those who were pursuing the goal of immortal life. . . . Therefore, let us love with our whole mind, dearly beloved, the marriage of Christ and the church, which was prefigured then in one city and is now celebrated over the whole earth. Homilies on the Gospels 1.14.[18]

Changed Water, Changed Wine. Cyril of Jerusalem: [Jesus] once changed water into wine by a word of command at Cana of Galilee. Should we not believe him when he changes wine into blood? It was when he had been invited to an ordinary bodily marriage that he performed the wonderful miracle at Cana. Should we not be much more ready to acknowledge that to "the sons of the bridal chamber"[19] he has granted the enjoyment of his body and blood? Mystagogical Lectures 4.2.[20]

The Miracle Continues at the Church's Banquet. Romanus Melodus:

When Christ, as a sign of His power, clearly changed the water into wine
All the crowd rejoiced, for they considered the taste marvelous.
Now we all partake at the banquet in the church
For Christ's blood is changed into wine
And we drink it with holy joy,
Praising the great bridegroom,
For he is the true bridegroom, the Son of Mary,
The Word before all time who took the form of a servant,
He who has in wisdom created all things.

Kontakion on the Marriage at Cana 7.20.[21]

[17]Ps 24:10 (23:10 LXX). [18]CS 110:145*. [19]Mt 9:15. [20]*DECT* 188; SC 126:136. [21]*KRBM* 1:74. Cyprian also has an excursus on the mixing of both water and wine in the chalice of the Eucharist testifying to the unity of Christ and his people (cf. *Epistle* 62.12-13).

THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE JOHN 2:12-25

Overview: John's sequence at this point in the Gospel narrative differs from that of the other Gospels and presents us with some difficulties regarding the overall sequence of events. The narrative begins with Jesus going down to Capernaum with his mother and his brothers, although the latter did not attend the wedding (Origen). The consensus of the ancient church was that Jesus' brothers are not the sons of the Virgin Mary but rather Mary's relatives and not, as some assert, sons of Joseph's predeceased wife (Bede). After staying in Capernaum for a short time, he goes up to Jerusalem for the Passover of the Jews (Origen), but this is not the same instance as recorded by the other Gospel writers when they speak of the cleansing of the temple (Augustine). He finds money changers in the temple similar to those who defile the church by seeking to profit from it (Origen, Augustine). The one who would be scourged later is here the one who scourges first (Augustine) because of his love for his Father and his house (Chrysostom). The whip he uses is the Holy Spirit who blows away the wicked (Heracleon via Origen). By expelling sheep and cattle Jesus demonstrates not only that the temple is not a marketplace but also that the end of the sacrificial system was at hand (Theodore). Our souls too are a temple of Christ (Origen) even as our bodies (Irenaeus) and the church are also his temple from which thieves and robbers, buyers and sellers are to be cast out (Augustine).

Why do the Jewish leaders demand a sign for the cleansing of the temple (Chrysostom)? When Jesus speaks of the temple of his body being destroyed as such a sign, the Jews later use his words against him at his trial (Origen). Christ demonstrates his divinity by asserting his authority to destroy and to raise up the body of his temple (Hilary). Even as Christ's body, which can also be understood as the church, may be destroyed by persecution, on the last day it too will also be raised (Origen). Christ calls his body a "temple" in order to reveal who it is who dwells there (Theodoret, Bede, Lactantius). The Son raised up his own body (Ambrose) but so also did the Father, who does nothing without the Word, since they are one (Augustine, Theodore). John says that the people believed his miracles, although we are not told of any miracles he did at Jerusalem at this point (Origen). Jesus exhibits appropriate caution, as should his ministers (Cyril of Alexandria), in not yet entrusting himself fully to those not born again (Augustine). He knew the hearts of those who did not truly believe (Theodore).

2:12 *Jesus Went to Capernaum*

John's Sequence of Events Differs from Other Gospels. Origen: The other three authors of the Gospels say that after the Lord's struggle with the devil, he withdrew into Galilee.[1] Matthew and Luke, however, say that he was in Nazareth first after these events and that he left there and went to settle in Capernaum.[2] Matthew and Mark also mention a reason for his withdrawal from there: he had heard that John had been delivered up.[3] . . .

We must let the reader know, then, that the

[1]Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14; Lk 4:14. [2]Mt 4:13; Lk 4:16, 31. [3]Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14.

truth of these accounts lies in the spiritual meanings, because if the discrepancy is not solved, many will dismiss the Gospels as not credible, or not written by a divine spirit or not successfully recorded. The composition of these Gospels, in fact, is said to have involved both. Let those who accept the four Gospels and who think the apparent discrepancy is not to be solved through the anagogical sense tell us when the Lord came to Capernaum in relation to the difficulty we mentioned earlier concerning the forty days of temptation that can have no place at all in John. For if it occurred six days after the time when he was baptized, since his ministry at the marriage in Cana of Galilee took place on the sixth day, it is clear that he has not been tempted, nor was he in Nazareth, nor had John yet been delivered up. . . .

The four Evangelists . . . made full use of many things done and said in accordance with the prodigious and unexpected power of Jesus. In some places they have interwoven in Scripture something made clear to them in a purely intellectual manner, with language as though it were something perceptible to the senses. But I do not condemn the fact that they have also made some minor changes in what happened so far as history is concerned, with a view to the usefulness of the mystical object. Consequently, they have related what happened in this place as though it happened in another, or what happened at this time as though at another time, and they have composed what is reported in this manner with a certain degree of adaptation. For their intention was to speak the truth spiritually and materially at the same time where that was possible but, where it was not possible in both ways, to prefer the spiritual to the material. Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.3-4, 10, 18-20.[4]

Whether the Brothers Were Invited to the Wedding. Origen: We must ask, however, why his brothers are not invited to the wedding (nor were they present, for they are not mentioned), but they go down to Capernaum with him and his mother and the disciples. Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.39.[5]

The Brothers Are Relatives of Mary. Bede: It tends to disturb some people that in the opening portion of this Gospel reading it is said that when our Lord went down to Capernaum, not only his mother and his disciples followed him, but also his brothers. There have been heretics who supposed that Joseph, the husband of the blessed Virgin Mary, begot of another wife those whom the Scriptures call the Lord's brothers. Others, with greater lack of faith, have supposed that he begot these of Mary herself after our Lord's birth. But we, dearly beloved brothers, without any hesitation or questioning must be aware and confess that not only the blessed Mother of God, but also Joseph, the most blessed witness and guardian of her chastity, always remained wholly aloof from the conjugal act; and further, that those who after the customary manner of the Scriptures are called our Savior's brothers or sisters were not their children but their relatives. Abraham spoke to Lot in the following way, "I beseech you, let there be no wrangling between you and me, and your shepherds and mine; for we are brothers."[6] Laban [said] to Jacob, "Because you are my brother, why should you have to serve me for nothing?"[7] It is a fact that Lot was the son of Haran, Abraham's brother,[8] and Jacob the son of Rebekah, Laban's sister;[9] but on account of their kinship they were called brothers. Because of this most common practice in the holy Scriptures, we should, as I have said, understand that the relatives of Mary and Joseph are called our Lord's brothers. Homilies on the Gospels 2.1.[10]

[3]Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14. [4]FC 80:254, 256, 259; SC 157:380-82, 386-88, 394. The reader sees an example of Origen's careful treatment of the literal sense. The seeming discrepancies he notes, however, affords him the opportunity for his spiritual interpretation, which the reader will find in Jn 2:16, 18. [5]FC 80:264. [6]Gen 13:8. [7]Gen 29:15. [8]Gen 11:26, 31. [9]Gen 25:20, 26. [10]CS 111:1-2. Bede sums up the consensus in the early church. Augustine is especially strong in his assertion that Mary remained a virgin. See *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 10.2 (NPNF 1 7:69).

2:13 *Jesus Went to Jerusalem for the Passover*

Passover "of the Jews." Origen: In examining the precision of the most wise John, I asked myself what the addition "of the Jews" means for him. For what other nation has a feast of the Pasch? For this reason it would have been sufficient if he had said, "And the Pasch was near." But perhaps, since there is a human Pasch for those who do not celebrate it according to the intention of the Scripture, and a divine one, which is the true one that is executed in spirit and truth by those who worship God in spirit and truth,[11] he has contrasted the one said to be "of the Jews" with the divine one. Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.67-68.[12]

Two Cleansings of the Temple. Augustine: This account of the multitude of sellers who were cast out of the temple is given by all the Evangelists, but John introduces it in a remarkably different order. After recording the testimony borne by John the Baptist to Jesus and mentioning that he went into Galilee at the time when he turned the water into wine, and after he has also noticed the sojourn of a few days in Capernaum, John proceeds to tell us that he went up to Jerusalem at the season of the Jews' Passover, and when he had made a scourge of small cords, drove out of the temple those who were selling in it. This makes it evident that this act was performed by the Lord not on a single occasion but twice over; but that only the first instance is put on record by John, and the last by the other three. Harmony of the Gospels 2.67.129.[13]

2:14-15 *Driving Out the Money Changers*

The House of the Savior's Father. Origen: He found in the temple, which is also said to be the house of the Savior's Father, that is, in the church or in the proclamation of the sound message of the church, some who were making his Father's house a house of merchandise. Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.133.[14]

Selling the Holy Spirit. Augustine: Nevertheless, in order to seek the mystery of the deed in the figurative meaning, who are they who sell the oxen? Who are they who sell the sheep and doves? They are those who seek their own interests in the church rather than those of Jesus Christ.[15] Those who have no desire for redemption have everything for sale. They do not want to be bought; they want to sell. Yet surely it is for their good that they be redeemed by the blood of Christ so that they may attain the peace of Christ. For what profit is there in acquiring anything temporal or transitory in this world—whether it be money, or gorging oneself on food or achieving high honors from your fellow human beings? Are not all things smoke and wind? Do not all things pass on in a moment? And woe to those who want to hang on to passing things, for they pass with them! . . . My brothers, those who seek such things sell them. For Simon [Magus] too wanted to buy the Holy Spirit for that very reason—because he wanted to sell the Holy Spirit[16]—and he thought that the apostles were the kind of merchants that the Lord drove out of the temple with a scourge. But he was the one who was actually such a merchant, wanting to buy what he might sell. He was of those who sell doves. For the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove.[17] Therefore, brothers, who are those who sell doves—who are they except those who say, "We give the Holy Spirit"? Why do they say this and at what price do they sell? At the price of their own honor. They receive for a time bishops' seats as their price, that they may seem to sell doves. Let them beware of the scourge of ropes. The dove is not for sale; it is given *gratis,* for it is called grace. Tractates on the Gospel of John 10.6.1-3.[18]

[11]See Jn 4:24. [12]FC 80:270; SC 157:426. [13]NPNF 1 6:160. See also Chrysostom *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 23.2 who speaks of two accounts: one at the beginning of Jesus' ministry and one at the beginning of his passion. See also Origen *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 10.129. [14]FC 80:286; SC 157:466. [15]Phil 2:21. [16]Acts 8:9-24. [17]Jn 1:32; Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:22. [18]FC 78:216-17.

The One Later Scourged, Scourges Here. Augustine: He, who was to be scourged by them, was first the one who scourged. Tractates on the Gospel of John 10.5.[19]

Why Such Violence? Chrysostom: But why did Christ use such violence? He was about to heal on the sabbath day and to do many things that appeared to them transgressions of the law. However, so that he might not appear to be acting as a rival to God and an opponent of his Father, he takes occasion to correct any such suspicion of theirs. . . . He did not merely "cast them out" but also "overturned the tables" and "poured out the money," so that they could see how someone who threw himself into such danger for the good order of the house could never despise his master. If he had acted out of hypocrisy, he would have only advised them, but to place himself in such danger was very daring. It was no small thing to offer himself to the anger of so many market people or to excite against himself a most brutal mob of petty dealers by his reproaches and the disruption he caused. This was not, in other words, the action of a pretender but of one choosing to suffer everything for the order of the house. For the same reason, to show his agreement with the Father, he did not say "the holy house" but "my Father's house." See how he even calls him "Father," and they are not angry with him. They thought he spoke in a more general way, but when he went on and spoke more plainly of his equality, this is when they become angry. Homilies on the Gospel of John 23.2.[20]

The Holy Spirit as the Whip. Heracleon (via Origen): [Heracleon says] that those found in the temple selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money-changers sitting, represent those who give nothing away free but suppose the entrance of foreigners into the temple to be a matter of merchandise and profit. They furnish the sacrifices for the service of God for the sake of their own profit and greed. . . . The whip, in turn, was made from cords by Jesus, who did not receive it from another. . . . The whip is an image of the power and activity of the Holy Spirit who blows away the wicked. . . . The whip, the cord, the linen, and all such things are an image of the power and activity of the Holy Spirit. . . . The whip was tied to a piece of wood.[21] The wood is a type of the cross . . . that the gamblers, the merchants and all evil have been nailed upon and destroyed by this wood. Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.212-214.[22]

Jesus Abolishes the Sacrificial System. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Having a symbolic purpose in mind, Jesus obscured his intent with allusions instead of stating plainly what he was doing. He thought that his hearers could not understand yet what he said. The disciples themselves did not understand either, as the Evangelist observes. They believed that by driving away the sellers of cattle and sheep, he abolished the market, but in truth what he meant was that the sacrifices of animals would be abolished. Commentary on John 1.2.13-18, 19.[23]

2:16 *How Dare You Turn My Father's House into a Market?*

Our Souls Are the Temple of Christ. Origen: Now Christ is especially jealous for the house of God in each of us, not wishing it to be a house of merchandise or that the house of prayer become a den of thieves, since he is the son of a jealous God. . . . [These words] set forth the fact that God wishes nothing alien to his will to be mingled with the soul of anyone, but especially with the soul of those who wish to receive [the teachings of the] most divine faith. Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.221.[24]

[19]NPNF 1 7:70*. [20]NPNF 1 14:81**. [21]Origen correctly notes that this detail is added by Heracleon. [22]FC 80:302**; TS 1 4:68-69. [23]CSCO 4 3:61. See also Origen *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 10.138-39 (FC 80:287). [24]FC 80:303-4; SC 157:514.

Our Bodies Are Temples in Accordance with Christ's Body. Irenaeus: He says that this handiwork is "the temple of God," thus declaring, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple."[25] Here he manifestly declares the body to be the temple in which the Spirit dwells. As also the Lord speaks in reference to himself, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He was speaking, however, it is said, of the temple of his body. And not only does he [the apostle] acknowledge our bodies to be a temple, but even to be the temple of Christ. Against Heresies 5.6.2.[26]

Buyers and Sellers in the Body of Christ. Augustine: Our Lord's driving out of the temple people who were seeking their own ends, who came to the temple to buy and sell, is symbolic. For if that temple was a symbol it obviously follows that the body of Christ, the true temple of which the other was an image, has within it some who are buyers and sellers, or in other words, people who are seeking their own interests and not those of Jesus Christ.

But the temple was not destroyed by the people who wanted to turn the house of God into a den of thieves, and neither will those who live evil lives in the Catholic church and do all they can to convert God's house into a robber's den succeed in destroying the temple. The time will come when they will be driven out by a whip made of their own sins.

This temple of God, this body of Christ, this assembly of believers, has but one voice and sings the psalms as though it were but one person. If we wish, it is our voice; if we wish, we may listen to the singer with our ears and ourselves sing in our hearts. But if we choose not to do so it will mean that we are like buyers and sellers, preoccupied with our own interests. Explanation of Psalm 130.2-3.[27]

2:17 *Zeal for God's House*

Cannot Be Indifferent in God's House. Augustine: He then is eaten up with zeal for God's house who desires to correct all that he sees wrong there. And if he cannot correct it, he endures and mourns. . . . Let the zeal for God's house consume every Christian wherever he or she is a member. . . . In your house you busy yourself in trying to prevent things going wrong. In the house of God, where salvation is offered, ought you to be indifferent? . . . Do you have a friend? Admonish him gently; a wife or husband? Admonish them too. . . . Do what you are able, according to your station. Tractates on the Gospel of John 10.9.[28]

2:18 *Asking for a Sign*

Why Did They Ask for a Sign? Chrysostom: But was there a need for a sign before putting a stop to their evil practices and freeing the house of God from such dishonor? Was not the fact that he had such great zeal for the house of God the greatest sign of his virtue? . . . They did not however remember the prophecy but asked for a sign, at once irritated that their shameful traffic was cut off, while at the same time expecting to prevent him from going further. For this dilemma, they thought, would oblige him either to work miracles or give up his present course of action. But he refuses to give them the sign, as he did on a similar occasion, when he answers them that an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah the prophet[29]—only the answer is more open there than here. He however who even anticipated people's wishes and gave signs when he was not asked, would not have rejected here a positive request, had he not seen that their minds were wicked and false and their intention

[25]1 Cor 3:16-17. [26]SC 153:80-82; ANF 1:532*. [27]CCL 40:1899-1900. See also Clement of Alexandria *Christ the Educator* 3.11. [28]NPNF 1 7:72**. [29]Mt 16:4.

was treacherous. . . . As it was, Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Homilies on the Gospel of John 23.2.[30]

2:19-21 *This Temple Raised in Three Days*

Jesus' Words Here Used in Later Accusations at His Trial. Origen: It is likely, moreover, that what has been recorded in the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark in the name of the false witness who accuses our Lord Jesus Christ at the end of the Gospel[31] contains a reference to the saying, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days." For he . . . was speaking about the temple of his body, but they, supposing that the things said here were said about the temple built from stones, accused him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.251-52.[32]

Christ Declares the Resurrection His Own Work. Hilary of Poitiers: By the power to take his soul again and to raise the temple up, he declares himself God and the resurrection his own work: yet he refers all to the authority of his Father's command. This is not contrary to the meaning of the apostle, when he proclaims Christ, the "power of God and the wisdom of God,"[33] thus referring all the magnificence of his work to the glory of the Father. For whatever Christ does, the power and the wisdom of God does. . . . Christ was raised from the dead by the working of God, for he himself worked the works of God the Father with a nature indistinguishable from God's. And our faith in the resurrection rests on the God who raised Christ from the dead. On the Trinity 9.12.[34]

The Mystery of the Body of Christ's Resurrection. Origen: Both, however (I mean the temple and Jesus' body), according to one interpretation, appear to me to be a type of the church, in that the church, being called a "temple,"[35] is built of living stones, becoming a spiritual house "for a holy priesthood,"[36] built "on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus being the chief cornerstone."[37] And through the saying, "Now you are the body of Christ and members in part,"[38] [we know] that even if the harmony of the stones of the temple appear to be destroyed, [or,] as it is written in Psalm 21,[39] all the bones of Christ appear to be scattered in persecutions and afflictions by the plots of those who wage war against the unity of the temple by persecutions—we know that the temple will be raised up and the body will arise on the third day after the day of evil that threatens it and the day of consummation that follows. For the third day will dawn in the new heaven and the new earth,[40] when these bones, the whole house of Israel,[41] shall be raised up on the great day of the Lord, once death has been conquered.[42] Consequently, the resurrection of Christ too, which followed from his passion on the cross, contains the mystery of the resurrection of the whole body of Christ. Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.228-29.[43]

Not This Body but "This Temple." Theodoret of Cyr: Why is it that the Evangelist did not pass over this but added a correction when he said, "He was talking about the temple of his body"? For he did not say "destroy" this body but "the temple," in order to reveal the God who resided within [it]. "Destroy this temple," which is much greater than the Jewish one. For the latter held the law, but the former held the lawgiver; the latter had the letter that kills, but the former had the life-giving Spirit.[44] Dialogue 3.61.[45]

The Cleansed Temple of Christ. Bede: With perfect justice he banished the wicked from

[30]NPNF 1 14:81**. [31]See Mt 26:61; Mk 14:58. [32]FC 80:310; SC 157:532. Tertullian sees Christ here affirming, in his reference to his body as a temple that can be destroyed, that it is the body, not the soul, that can be destroyed in death. See *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 18. [33]1 Cor 1:24. [34]NPNF 2 9:159. See also Novatian *On the Trinity* 21. [35]See Eph 2:21. [36]1 Pet 2:5. [37]Eph 2:20. [38]1 Cor 12:27. [39]See Ps 21:15 lxx. [40]See Rev 21:1. [41]See Ezek 37:11. [42]See 1 Cor 15:54. [43]FC 80:305-6; SC 157:520. [44]See Jn 6:63. [45]FC 106:243.

the temple, since the temple represented the temple of his body, in which there was no stain of any kind of sin. Homilies on the Gospels 2.1.[46]

Christ Is the True Temple of God. Lactantius: [Christ] meant that his passion would be brief and that when he was put to death . . . he would raise himself up on the third day. For he himself was the true temple of God. . . . For when there was no justice on the earth, [God] sent a teacher, a living law, as it were, to establish his name and a new temple, to sow the seeds of true and loving worship throughout the whole earth by his words and example. Divine Institutes 4.18, 25.[47]

2:22 *When Jesus Was Raised from the Dead*

The Son, Being God, Raised Up His Own Body. Ambrose: It was not the Father who divested himself of the flesh; for not the Father, but, as we read, the Word was made flesh.[48] You see, then, that the Arians, in dividing the Father from the Son, run into danger of saying that the Father endured passion. We, however, can easily show that the words treat of the Son's action, for the Son himself indeed raised his own body again, as he himself said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And he himself quickens us together with his body: "For as the Father raises the dead and quickens them, so also the Son quickens whom he will."[49] . . . He, therefore, who has achieved the work of our resurrection, is plainly pointed out to be truly God. On the Christian Faith 3.2.13-14.[50]

The Father and the Son Are One. Augustine: See that he was God, equal with the Father. My brothers, the apostle says, "who raised him from the dead."[51] About whom is he speaking? About the Father. He says, "He became obedient unto death, even to death on a cross. For this reason, God also has raised him from the dead and has given him the name that is above every name."[52] The Lord was raised up again and exalted. He raised him up again. Who? The Father, to whom he said in the Psalms, "Raise me up, and I shall requite them."[53] Therefore the Father raised him up again. Did he [the Son] not raise himself? But what does the Father do without the Word? What does the Father do without his only One? For hear that he also was God: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Did he say, "Destroy the temple which the Father will raise up in three days"? But just as when the Father raises up, the Son, too, raises up; so also when the Son raises up, the Father, too, raises up, because the Son said, "I and the Father are one."[54] Tractates on the Gospel of John 10.11.3.[55]

Jesus Resurrects His Body in Harmony with the Father. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Even though it is said that the Father raises Christ, the meaning of this expression is not dubious. The unity that is between them both in all operations causes both Father and Son to be attributed with equal rights. Commentary on John 1.2.21.[56]

2:23 *The People Believed Jesus' Miracles*

Which Miracles Did They See? Origen: But how was it that many believed in him from seeing his miracles? For he seems to have performed no supernatural works at Jerusalem, unless we assume Scripture has passed over them. May not however the act of his making a scourge of small cords and driving all out of the temple be considered a miracle? Commentary on the Gospel of John 10.319.[57]

2:24 *Jesus Did Not Trust Himself to the People*

[46]CS 111:7. [47]FC 49:291, 307-8. [48]Jn 1:14. [49]Jn 5:21. [50]NPNF 2 10:244*. [51]Gal 1:1; Col 2:12. [52]Phil 2:8-9. [53]See Ps 41:10 (40:11 LXX, Vg). [54]Jn 10:30. [55]FC 78:222-23*. [56]CSCO 4 3:62. [57]FC 80:326**; SC 157:578.

Stewards of the Mysteries Should Follow Jesus' Caution. Cyril of Alexandria: Christ does not yet commit himself to such novices, showing that affinity with God is a great thing and most worthy of love. It does not just lie there before those who want to have it but is achieved by an intense desire for good, along with diligence and time. Let the stewards of the mysteries of the Savior learn then not to suddenly admit just anyone within the sacred veils or to permit them to approach the divine tables who are neophytes who might be untimely baptized and importunely believing on Christ the Lord of all. As an example to us in this also in teaching us whom rightly to initiate, he indeed receives the believers but is seen not yet to have confidence in them in that he does not commit himself to them, making clear that it is only right that novices spend no small time under instruction, for rarely even then will they become faithful. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[58]

2:25 *Jesus Knew What Was in People*

Rebirth of Baptism and Jesus' Trust. Augustine: See how they already believed in Jesus but Jesus himself did not entrust himself to them. Why? Because they were not yet born again of water and the Spirit. Because of that we have encouraged and do encourage our brothers, the catechumens. For if you should ask them, they have already believed in Jesus. But because they do not yet receive his body and blood, Jesus has not yet trusted himself to them. What are they to do that Jesus may trust himself to them? Let them be born again of water and the Spirit. Let the church, which is pregnant with them, bring them forth. They have been conceived; let them be brought forth into the light. Let them have breasts where they may be nourished. Let them not fear that they may be choked after their birth. Let them not withdraw from their mother's breasts. Tractates on the Gospel of John 12.3.2.[59]

Jesus Knows That the Faith of People Is Still Imperfect. Theodore of Mopsuestia: If they believed, why did he not entrust himself to them? Clearly the words "many believed in him" are not said about a firm and true faith, such as the faith of those who, after believing once that his words were true, considered him as a doctor of truth, without doubting the things said by him. That kind of faith is typical of the true believers. But here, John refers to people who were astonished by the events that happened and praised him as a great and admirable man. In fact, not all of them approved his words by showing their respect for him to others. Such respect, too, is typical of true believers. So, he added, "But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them." In these words there is a particular doctrine of the true faith. Indeed, the virtue of the knowledge of Christ is revealed through which he was not cheated by the outward appearance of those coming to him. Rather by recognizing precisely each of them for who they were, he knew already who were the true disciples and who were in doubt and coming to him under false pretenses. Commentary on John 2.2.24-25.[60]

[58]LF 43:165**. [59]FC 79:30**. [60]CSCO 4 3:64-65.

NICODEMUS AND THE QUESTION OF BEING BORN AGAIN JOHN 3:1-12

Overview: Nicodemus was among those who saw the previous miracles, hoping to learn more about who Jesus was (Bede). Although he appears elsewhere in the Gospels as a follower of Jesus (Chrysostom), at this point he does not understand the divine origin of Jesus (Cyril of Alexandria). Only those who are born again, having been illuminated, can understand who Jesus really is (Chrysostom, Justin). When the soul is born again, it is born and created anew in the likeness of God's image (Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Theodore). The first birth is from Adam and Eve; this second is from God and the church (Augustine). Nicodemus, however, is astonished, objecting to the kind of birth Jesus is speaking about and to this new kind of kingdom, which was unheard of among the Jews (Chrysostom). This birth recreates us, making us new instead of old and like God instead of like what we are now (Gregory of Nazianzus). We are transformed as the unjust seed is born again from the just seed (Augustine).

As one of little faith, Nicodemus is slow to understand the meaning of this new birth and how it can take place (Chrysostom), but Jesus explains to him how the Spirit exercises his power through the water (Theodore). If anyone asks how one is born of water and the Spirit, that person could just as easily ask how Adam was born of the dust of the ground (Chrysostom). The baptism Jesus commands is the washing of regeneration, which brings about a radical break with the past (Justin, Tertullian, Basil). This use of water is indispensable and intimately connected with the Word (Chrysostom) and the Spirit (Augustine) in the renewing of the mind (Ambrose). We obtain by grace what we do not have by nature as our decaying flesh is born again (Leo) through that water which, when enabled by the Spirit, brings life as it did at creation, just as a womb brings life to an embryo (Chrysostom).

According to Augustine, a baptized believer whose sin is forgiven still begets a child burdened with Adam's sin since what is born of the flesh is flesh (Augustine). However, there is also more to baptism than forgiveness of sins. There is also life and salvation as we participate in Christ's resurrection (Theodoret). Just as death comes from what is born of the flesh, so life comes from what is born of the Spirit (Gregory of Nyssa). The Spirit accomplishes God's work of begetting in us, making us spiritual (Chrysostom), as our minds are transformed by Christ so that they are completely at one with God who is Spirit (Ammonius). And the water joined to the Spirit is the outward sign of that interior and incorporeal generation (Theodore). Christ does not exclude himself from this statement concerning flesh and spirit, although in his case he was born of both in a unique way (Tertullian).

Jesus uses the everyday phenomenon of wind to help Nicodemus understand the analogous power of the Spirit, which cannot be restrained (Chrysostom). We do not understand the movement of the Spirit any more than we understand our own regeneration (Hilary). The Spirit blows where it pleases without limit, acting according to its own will (Theodore), not according to another's order (Ambrose), although its will is in common with the Father and Son from whom it is sent and proceeds (Bede). You hear its sound just as those in Jerusalem did at Pentecost (Theodore). You hear the Spirit's voice, who spoke by the prophets (Ammonius), when you are filled with it (Bede) and partake of the means of grace in Word and sacrament (Augustine). The Spirit knows in whom it dwells and cannot be deceived (Ignatius). We may be ignorant of its movements, since they cannot be tracked, but they can be seen, as evidenced in the events of the gospel and Pentecost (Treatise). It comes and goes in the saints, who do not always remain pure, but it constantly remains on Christ, who is totally pure (Bede). If we do not even understand the operation of the wind, why do we become so concerned about understanding how the Spirit works (Chrysostom)?

Those who are born of the Spirit are not understood by those who are not born of the Spirit. In failing to understand this, Nicodemus learns humility from Jesus (Augustine) since, as Israel's teacher, he should have known about this from the numerous occurrences in the Old Testament regarding births outside the womb and cleansings with water (Chrysostom, Ephrem). But we also learn from Jesus to teach only what our students can handle. When Jesus taught, he had the trinitarian witness to testify to his veracity. If Nicodemus could not understand the earthly things of which Jesus spoke, there is no way he would be able to understand heavenly things (Cyril of Alexandria). But Jesus here charges Nicodemus not only with a lack of understanding, but also a lack of belief, since what Jesus is teaching is beyond understanding, and so it is only faith that could comprehend it (Chrysostom).

3:1 *A Pharisee Named Nicodemus*

Nicodemus Saw the Previous Miracles. Bede: Nicodemus was one of the many who believed in Jesus,[1] and therefore he came at night, and not during the day because he was not yet illumined with the gracious heavenly light. Exposition on the Gospel of John 2.[2]

3:2 *Nicodemus Came to Jesus at Night*

He Hopes to Learn More of Christ's Mysteries. Bede: This ruler of the Jews came to Jesus by night, hoping, that is, by so secret an interview, to learn more of the mysteries of the faith; the late public miracles having given him a rudimentary knowledge of them. Exposition of the Gospel of John 3.[3]

Nicodemus Appears Elsewhere in the Gospel. Chrysostom: This man [Nicodemus] appears also in the middle of the Gospel defend-

[1]Jn 2:23. [2]PL 92:667. [3]PL 92:667.

ing Christ when he says, "Our law judges no man before it hears him."[4] The Jews in anger replied to him, "Search and look, for out of Galilee arises no prophet." Again after the crucifixion he bestowed great care upon the burial of the Lord's body: "And there came also Nicodemus," says the Evangelist, "who first came to the Lord by night and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight."[5] And even now he was disposed toward Christ, but not as he should have been, nor did he yet have a proper regard for Jesus, being still entangled in Jewish misunderstanding. This is why he came by night, because he feared to do so by day. Yet our merciful God did not reject or rebuke him for this, or deprive him of his instruction. Rather, with much kindness Jesus talked with him and disclosed to him rather enigmatically some highly exalted doctrines indeed—nevertheless, Jesus still disclosed them. Homilies on the Gospel of John 24.1.[6]

Nicodemus Does Not Know Who Jesus Truly Is. Cyril of Alexandria: Nicodemus imagines that he can become pious enough to attain salvation merely by marveling at the wonders Jesus had done. . . . Calling Jesus a teacher from God and a co-worker with him, he does not yet know that Jesus is by nature God, nor does Nicodemus understand the plan of salvation according to the flesh. Instead, he still approaches Jesus as a mere man and has only a slight conception of who he is. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[7]

3:3 *Unless One Is Born Again*

Only Those Born Again Can Understand Who Jesus Is. Chrysostom: In other words: Unless you are born again and receive the right instruction, you are wandering somewhere out there far away from the kingdom of heaven. But he does not speak as plainly as this, preferring to make what he says easier to hear by generalizing, "Unless *one* is born again." In this way he does not specifically address his remarks at Nicodemus. . . . Now, if he had spoken to the Jews this way they would have ridiculed him and then left. But Nicodemus shows he wants to learn. . . . And so what Christ says to him is something like this: If you are not born again, if you do not share in the Spirit that comes through the washing of regeneration, everything you think about me will be from a human point of view, not a spiritual one. . . . Now, some take the expression "again"[8] to mean "from heaven"; others think it means "from the beginning." Either way, it is impossible, Christ says, for someone who is not born in this way to see the kingdom of God. By these words our Lord discloses his nature, showing that he is more than what he appears to the outward eye. Homilies on the Gospel of John 24.2.[9]

The One Who Is Illuminated Is Washed. Justin Martyr: At our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice by our parents coming together. We were brought up with bad habits and wicked training. However, so that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over the one who chooses to be born again and has repented of his sins the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe. The one who leads to the font the person that is to be washed calls him by this name alone. For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God. And if any one dares to say this name, he raves with a hopeless madness. Also this washing is called illumination because those who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. The one who is illuminated is thus washed in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus. First Apology 61.[10]

[4]Jn 7:51. [5]Jn 19:39. [6]NPNF 1 14:84. [7]LF 43:167*. [8]Gk *anōthen* ("again" or "from above"). [9]NPNF 1 14:85**. [10]ANF 1:183.

Portrait and Image in Baptism. Athanasius: Once the likeness painted on a panel has been effaced by stains from outside itself, the one whose likeness it is needs to come once more to enable the portrait to be renewed on the same wood. And, for the sake of his picture, even the mere wood on which it is painted is not thrown away, but the outline is renewed upon it. In the same way, the most holy Son of the Father, being the image of the Father, came to our world to renew humankind once made in his likeness. He came to find such lost individuals by the remission of their sins. He says as much himself in the Gospels: "I came to find and to save the lost."[11] This is why he also said to the Jews, "Except one be born again," not meaning, as they thought, birth from a woman, but speaking of the soul born and created anew in the likeness of God's image. On the Incarnation 14.1-2.[12]

Spiritual Regeneration Leads Us to Christ. Gregory of Nazianzus: And indeed from the Spirit comes our new birth, and from the new birth our new creation, and from the new creation our deeper knowledge of the dignity of him from whom it is derived. On the Holy Spirit, Theological Oration 5(31).28.[13]

A New Birth into the Image of the Resurrection. Theodore of Mopsuestia: [Jesus seems to be saying to him], "If you believe that I was sent as a teacher from God, and the miracles I accomplished convince you of this, as you say, our teaching then requires another way of life and expects the beginning of a new generation." So we hope indeed to see the kingdom of God, because, while we are mortal, we cannot go there if we are not raised incorruptible after our death. We believe that this happens typologically through baptism: we are born again in an image of the resurrection, that is, of a new state [of being]. Commentary on John 2.3.3.[14]

The Two Births. Augustine: [Nicodemus] knew only one birth from Adam and Eve. He did not yet know [the birth] from God and the church. He knew only the parents who beget death. He did not yet know the parents who beget life. He knew only the parents who beget those who will succeed them. He did not yet know the parents who, living forever, beget those who will remain. Therefore, although there are two births, he only knew one. One is from earth, the other from heaven. One is from the flesh, the other from the Spirit. One is from mortality, the other from eternity. One is from male and female, the other from God and the church. But these two are each individual instances. Neither the one nor the other can be repeated.[15] Tractates on the Gospel of John 11.6.1.[16]

3:4 *How Is It Possible to Be Born a Second Time?*

Two Points of Astonishment for Nicodemus. Chrysostom: [Nicodemus] coming to Jesus, as to a man, is confused and startled and perplexed on learning greater things than any human being could speak, things no one had ever heard before. For a while, he is impressed by the sublime character of the sayings, but his mind is darkened and unstable, borne about in every direction and on the point of falling away from the faith. Therefore he objects to what he has heard as being impossible in order to bring out a fuller explanation from Jesus. . . . There were two difficulties for him. The first concerned the kind of birth Jesus was talking about; the second, this idea of the kingdom since neither had the name of the kingdom ever been heard among the Jews, nor of a birth like this. But he stops for a while at the

[11]Lk 19:10. [12]NPNF 2 4:43-44**. [13]NPNF 2 7:327. [14]CSCO 4 3:66. [15]This last remark is directed against the Donatists, a North African Christian sect at the time of Augustine that insisted upon rebaptizing persons who had been baptized by unworthy or sinful ministers, particularly by those who renounced the faith under duress from the Roman persecution. Like many of Augustine's tractates on the Gospel of John, *Tractate* 11 is devoted to demonstrating that the validity or sanctifying power of baptism and the other sacraments comes "from God through the church," not from the individuals through whom they are administered. [16]FC 79:16*.

first, which most astonished him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 24.3.[17]

A Twofold Cleansing. Gregory of Nazianzus: We are a compound of both body and soul. The one part is visible, the other invisible. In the same way, our cleansing also is twofold, that is, by water and the Spirit. The one is received visibly in the body, the other concurs with it invisibly and apart from the body. . . . The one that comes to the aid of our first birth makes us new instead of old and like God instead of what we now are. It recasts us without fire and creates us anew without breaking us up. For . . . the virtue of baptism is to be understood as a covenant with God for a second life and a purer conversation. On Holy Baptism, Oration 40.8.[18]

A Sinner Reborn from the Seed of the Just. Augustine: You wonder why a sinner should be born of the seed of a just person. Don't you also wonder why a wild olive is born of the seed of an olive tree? Here is another comparison: think of the baptized righteous person as a grain that has been gleaned. Don't you observe that from this gleaned grain wheat is born with the chaff, without which it was sown? Again, while the propagation of those who are reborn is a matter of spiritual regeneration, do you really want a person to be born circumcised of a circumcised person? Certainly this kind of generation is a bodily act, and circumcision is a bodily act. And yet the offspring of a circumcised man is not born circumcised. So in the same way the offspring of a baptized person cannot be born baptized, because nobody is born again before being born. Sermon 294.16.[19]

Nicodemus's Question Indicates a Weak Faith. Chrysostom: You call him "Master" and say that he "comes from God," and yet you do not receive his words but utilize a word with your master that brings in endless confusion. For the "how" is the doubting question of those who have no strong belief and are still earthbound. Therefore Sarah laughed when she said, "How?"[20] And many others who have asked this question have fallen from the faith.

Some ask, "How was he begotten?" others, "How was he made flesh?" They subject that infinite essence to the weakness of their own reasonings. Knowing this, we ought to avoid this unseasonable curiosity because those who search into these matters will, without ever learning the "how," fall away from the right faith. Nicodemus here asks from anxiety. . . . But observe how ridiculous anyone talks when he commits spiritual things to his own reasonings. Homilies on the Gospel of John 24.2-3.[21]

Jesus Explains the Meaning of the New Birth. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Since Nicodemus had asked, "Can one enter again into the mother's womb and be born?" our Lord explained that this occurs through both water and Spirit. He said water because the action takes place in water, Spirit because the Spirit exercises his power through the water. This is called the Spirit of adoption, not water, because we receive new birth through his power. For this reason in baptism we name the Spirit together with the Father and the Son, but we do not mention the water, so that it may be clear that water is employed as a symbol and for a [visible] use. But we invoke the Spirit as the effective agent together with the Father and the Son. That is why, in reply to Nicodemus's question, "Can one enter again into the mother's womb and be born?" our Lord answers, "Through both water and Spirit." Just as in the instance of natural birth, where the womb is the place in which the child is formed and then perfected by the divine virtue that forms it from the beginning, so also in this place, the water is referred to in place of the womb and the Spirit in place of the Lord as the effective agent. Baptism is said to be a symbol of death and resurrection, and so it is called a new birth. Just as one who is res-

[17]NPNF 1 14:85-86**. [18]NPNF 2 7:362**. [19]*WSA* 3 8:191. [20]See Gen 18:12. [21]NPNF 1 14:85**.

urrected is considered to be created again after death, so also one who is begotten in baptism is said to be born again, because first he dies in water and in a similar way is resurrected by the power of the Spirit. The immersion represents the burial while the raising of the head out of the water at every invocation of the name represents the resurrection that takes place through the Spirit. Commentary on John 2.3.4-5.[22]

3:5 *The Birth of Water and Spirit*

Born of Water and Spirit. Chrysostom: If anyone asks how is someone born of water, I ask in return, how is someone [like Adam] born from the earth? How was the clay separated into different parts? How were all different kinds of things, like bones, sinews, arteries, veins, and so on made from one kind of material (which itself was only earth?) . . . For, as in the beginning, earth was the subject matter[23] but the whole fabric of the human body was the work of him who molded it, so now too, though the element of water is the subject matter, the whole work is done by the Spirit of grace. . . . Then, humanity was formed last, when the creation had been accomplished. Now, on the contrary, the new person is formed before the new creation. He is born first, and then the world is fashioned anew. . . . Then, he gave him a garden as his place to live. Now, he has opened heaven to us. . . . The first creation then, that is, that of Adam, was from earth; the next, that of the woman, from his rib; the next, that of Abel, from seed, yet we cannot comprehend any of these. . . . How then shall we be able to account for the unseen generation by baptism, which is far greater than these, or how can we require arguments for that strange and marvelous birth? . . . The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit do everything. Let us then believe the declaration of God. That is more trustworthy than actual seeing. Sight often is in error; it is impossible that God's Word should fail. Let us then believe it. Homilies on the Gospel of John 25.1-2.[24]

Baptism and Regeneration. Justin Martyr: As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, . . . [these] are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born again." Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs is clear to everyone. And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins is declared by Isaiah the prophet: "Wash, make yourselves clean. Put away evil from your souls; learn to do good. Judge the fatherless and plead for the widow and come and let us reason together, says the Lord. And though your sins are as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; and though they are as crimson, I will make them white as snow."[25] First Apology 61.[26]

Rebirth Ties Faith to the Necessity of Baptism. Tertullian: For the law of baptizing has been imposed and the formula prescribed: "Go," he says, "teach the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."[27] The comparison with this law of that definition, "Unless one has been reborn of water and Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of the heavens," has tied faith to the necessity of baptism. Accordingly, all thereafter who became believers used to be baptized. On Baptism 13.[28]

New Birth Manifests a Radical Break with the Past. Basil the Great: First of all, it is necessary that the continuity of the old life be cut. And this is impossible unless one is born again, according to the Lord's word. For the regeneration, as indeed the name shows, is a

[22]CSCO 4 3:67-68. [23]Gk *hypekeito stoicheion*. [24]NPNF 1 14:87-88**; PG 59:149-50. [25]Is 1:16-20. [26]ANF 1:183. [27]Mt 28:19. [28]ANF 3:676.

beginning of a second life. So before beginning the second, it is necessary to put an end to the first. For just as in the case of runners who turn and take the second course, a kind of break and pause intervenes between the movements in the opposite direction, so also in making a change in lives it seems necessary for death to come as mediator between the two, ending all that goes before, and beginning all that comes after. On the Spirit 15.35.[29]

Why Is Water Included in Baptism? Chrysostom: That the need of water [in baptism] is absolute and indispensable, you may learn in this way. On one occasion, when the Spirit had flown down before the water was applied, the apostle did not stand idle at this point, but, as though the water were necessary and not superfluous, observe what he says, "Can any one forbid water so that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"[30] Why then is water needed? . . . In baptism, the pledges of our covenant with God are fulfilled: burial and death, resurrection and life. And these all take place at once. For by the immersion of our heads in the water, the old person disappears and is buried as it were in a tomb below and wholly sunk forever. Then as we raise them again, the new person rises in his place. As easy as it is for us to dip and to lift our heads again, that is how easy it is for God to bury the old person and to show forth the new. And this is done three times so that you may learn that the power of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit fulfills all this. Homilies on the Gospel of John 25.2.[31]

Rebirth Takes Place in the Holy Spirit. Augustine: And then that rebirth, which brings about the forgiveness of all past sins, takes place in the Holy Spirit, according to the Lord's own words, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God." But it is one thing to be born of the Spirit, another to be fed by the Spirit; just as it is one thing to be born of the flesh, which happens when a mother gives birth, and another to be fed from the flesh, which appears when she nurses the baby. We see the child turn to drink with delight from the bosom of her who brought it forth to life. Its life continues to be nourished by the same source which brought it into being. Sermon 71.19.[32]

Rebirth Is the Rebirth of the Spirit in One's Mind. Ambrose: Who is the one who is born of the Spirit and is made spirit but he who is renewed in the spirit of his mind?[33] This certainly is he who is regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, since we receive the hope of eternal life through the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.[34] And elsewhere the apostle Peter says, "You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."[35] For who is the one who is baptized with the Holy Spirit but the one who is born again through water and the Holy Spirit? Therefore the Lord said of the Holy Spirit: "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit." And therefore he declared that we are born of him in the latter case, through whom he said that we were born in the former. This is the sentence of the Lord. I rest on what is written, not on argument. On the Holy Spirit 3.10.64.[36]

Decaying Flesh Born Again. Leo the Great: Whoever of you, therefore, takes pride (with devotion and faith) in the name of Christian, ponder, by an accurate judgment, the grace of this reconciliation. To you once "cast aside," to you driven out from the thrones of "paradise,"[37] to you dying from long exiles, to you scattered into "dust" and ashes,[38] who had no longer any hope of living—to you has "power"[39] been given through the incarnation of the Word. With it, you can "return from far away"[40] to your Maker, can recognize your Father, can become free from

[29]NPNF 2 8:21. [30]Acts 10:47. [31]NPNF 1 14:89**. [32]*WSA* 3 3:257. [33]See Eph 4:23. [34]Tit 3:5. [35]Acts 11:16. [36]NPNF 2 10:144. [37]See Gen 3:23-24. [38]See Gen 3:19. [39]See Jn 1:12. [40]See Lk 15:13, 17.

slavery and can be made again a child rather than an outsider. With this power, you who were born of flesh that is subject to decay can be "born again from the Spirit" of God and can obtain through grace what you do not have through nature. Sermon 22.5.1.[41]

A Womb Is to an Embryo as Water Is to a Believer. Chrysostom: There is no longer a mother, or birth pangs, or sleep or coming together and embracing of bodies. From here on out, all the fabric of our nature is framed above, of the Holy Spirit and water. The water brings about the birth of the one who is born. What the womb is to the embryo, the water is to the believer because the water is where the person is fashioned and formed. At first it was said, "Let the waters bring forth the creeping things that have life."[42] But from the time that the Lord entered the streams of the Jordan, the water no longer gives the "creeping things that have life" but souls that are rational and endued with the Spirit. . . . But that which is fashioned in the womb needs time, whereas that fashioned in the water is all done in an instant. . . . For the nature of the body is such as to require time for its completion, but spiritual creations are perfect from the beginning. Homilies on the Gospel of John 26.1.[43]

3:6 *Flesh from Flesh, Spirit from Spirit*

Children and Baptism. Augustine: "But why," they ask, "does a baptized believer, whose sin has already been forgiven, beget a child who is still burdened with the first person's sin?" Because he begets him from the flesh, not from the spirit. "What is born of the flesh is flesh." "And if the outer self," says the apostle, "is decaying, yet the inner self is being renewed from day to day."[44] It is not from what is being renewed in you that you beget a child. You beget a child from what is decaying in you. You, in order not to die forever, were born and reborn. This child is already born, not yet reborn. If you are alive as a result of being reborn, allow it too to be reborn and live. . . . Why oppose this? Why try to smash the ancient rule of faith with new objections? After all, what is this that you are saying: "Little children don't have even original sin in the least degree"? What does this that you say amount to, but that they should not come to Jesus? But Jesus cries out to you, "Let the little children come to me."[45] Sermon 174.9.[46]

Mystery of Baptism Not Limited to Forgiveness. Theodoret of Cyr: If the only meaning of baptism were remission of sins, why would we baptize newborn children who have not yet tasted of sin? But the mystery of baptism is not limited to this. It is a promise of greater and more perfect gifts. In it are the promises of future delights. It is the type of the future resurrection, a communion with the master's Passion, a participation in his resurrection, a mantle of salvation, a tunic of gladness, a garment of light, or rather it is light itself. Compendium of Heretical Myths 5.18.[47]

Flesh Is Death, but the Spirit Is Life. Gregory of Nyssa: We know too that the flesh is subject to death because of sin, but the Spirit of God is both incorruptible and life-giving and beyond death. As at our physical birth there comes into the world with us a potentiality of being again turned to dust, plainly the Spirit also imparts a life-giving potentiality to the children begotten by himself. What lesson, then, do we learn from this? We learn that we should wean ourselves from this life in the flesh, which has an

[41]FC 93:85. [42]Gen 1:20 LXX. [43]NPNF 1 14:90**. [44]2 Cor 4:16. [45]Mk 10:14. [46]*WSA* 3 5:262-63. Augustine here enunciates the doctrine of original sin, which states that Adam's sin and its curse is passed on to his descendants generation after generation at birth. There is little evidence among the Greek fathers, however, that they held any notion of inherited guilt or transmitted sin. See the Theodoret quote which follows. See also Augustine *On the Baptism of Infants* 1.58 (NPNF 1 5:37-38). [47]PG 83:512. The translation is taken from John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (Fordham University Press: New York, 1974), 194, to which the reader is directed for further comment on this passage from the Eastern Father's perspective.

inevitable follower, death; and that we should search for a way of life that does not bring death along with it. On Virginity 13.[48]

The Spirit Does God's Work of Begetting. Chrysostom: Do you see the dignity of the Spirit? It appears performing the work of God. For above he said that some "were begotten of God."[49] Here he says that the Spirit begets them. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." He means, "The one that is born[50] of the Spirit is spiritual." For the birth of which he speaks here is not that according to essence[51] but according to honor and grace. Homilies on the Gospel of John 26.1.[52]

Christ Transforms Us into Spiritual Beings. Ammonius: As God the Father is Spirit and as God the Son is Spirit, therefore our God and Father begets by the Spirit the one who is Son and God. Therefore Christ is of one substance with the Father according to his divine nature and of one substance with his mother according to his flesh. The one and the same Christ is from both, unchangeably and without confusion [of the two natures]. But according to what is now canonically held concerning the Logos of the Lord, our minds too are then to be transformed by Christ to be completely conformed to that which is spiritual. Fragments on John 75.[53]

Jesus Speaks of Spiritual Generation. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He means that the work of generating is necessarily similar to the nature of the generator: when flesh generates flesh, necessarily the generation is bodily. When the spirit is the generator, it is necessary that we understand the generation as incorporeal and spiritual. Through this he also demonstrates that the water, which he united to the Spirit, does not operate with him but is mentioned as a symbol and for a [visible] use. Therefore he did not add "what is born of water" but only says "what is born of the Spirit" by clearly attributing the work of generating to the Spirit. Commentary on John 2.3.6.[54]

Christ Was Born of Spirit and Flesh. Tertullian: The Lord himself axiomatically and distinctly pronounced, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," because it *is* born from the flesh. But if he here spoke simply of a human being and not of himself, then you must deny absolutely that Christ is man and must maintain that human nature was not suitable to him. And then he adds, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," because God is a Spirit, and he was born of God. Now this description is certainly even more applicable to him than it is to those who believe in him. But if this passage indeed applies to him, then why does not the preceding one also? For you cannot divide their relation and adapt this to him and the previous clause to all other people, especially as you do not deny that Christ possesses the two substances, both of the flesh and of the Spirit. Besides, as he was in possession both of flesh and of Spirit, he cannot possibly—when speaking of the condition of the two substances that he himself bears—be supposed to have determined that the Spirit indeed was his own but that the flesh was not his own. Forasmuch, therefore, as he is of the Spirit, he is God the Spirit and is born of God; just as he is also born of the flesh of man, being generated in the flesh as man. On the Flesh of Christ 18.5-7.[55]

3:7-8 *The Wind Blows Wherever It Pleases*

The Power of the Wind, the Power of the Spirit. Chrysostom: By saying, "Do not be amazed," he indicates [Nicodemus's] confusion and leads him by way of example to something lighter than the body. . . . He speaks neither of dense bodies nor of things that are purely incorporeal. For if Nicodemus had heard this

[48]NPNF 2 5:359**. [49]Jn 1:13. [50]Or "begotten." [51]Gk *ousian*. [52]NPNF 1 14:91**. [53]*JKGK* 216. [54]CSCO 4 3:68. [55]CCL 2:906-7; ANF 3:537. See also *Against Praxeas* 27.

there is no way he could have received it. Instead, he found something in between what is and what is not a body, namely, the motion of the wind. . . . Although he says "it blows where it pleases," he does not say this as if the wind had any power of choice. He is simply declaring that its natural motion is powerful and cannot be hindered. . . . The expression, therefore, "blows where it pleases," is that of one who would show that it cannot be restrained, that it is spread abroad everywhere and that no one can stop it from passing here and there. It goes abroad with great might, and no one is able to turn aside its violence. . . . It establishes the power of the Comforter. For no one can hold the wind; it moves where it pleases. And so, whether it is the laws of nature or the limits of bodily generation or anything else like this—they have no ability to restrain the operations of the Spirit. Homilies on the Gospel of John 26.1-2.[56]

Rebirth and Spirit's Movement Are Beyond Understanding. Hilary of Poitiers: Though I have received faith by my regeneration, I am still in ignorance. And yet, I have a firm hold on a reality I do not understand. I am born again, capable of rebirth, but without conscious perception of it. Moreover, the Spirit has no limits. He speaks when he wants, what he wants and where he wants. We are conscious of his presence when he comes, but the reason for his approach or his departure remains unknown to us. On the Trinity 12.56.[57]

The Nature of the Spirit Is Its Freedom. Theodore of Mopsuestia: The Holy Spirit, because it is omnipotent, performs everything as it wants, and nothing can resist its operations. You hear its voice, that is, perceive the sound of its coming. You cannot ascertain in which place its person is contained so that you might otherwise understand its way of operating. Its nature is immense, and therefore it is everywhere it chooses to be. In the same way, its action is beyond comprehension because it does everything according to its own will. Commentary on John 2.3.7-8.[58]

The Spirit Has Absolute Freedom, as Has the Son. Ambrose: "Where it chooses," says the Scripture, not "where it is ordered." If, then, the Spirit does breathe where it chooses, cannot the Son do what he wills? Why, it is the very same Son of God who in his gospel says that the Spirit has power to breathe where it chooses. Does the Son, therefore, confess the Spirit to be greater, in that it has power to do what is not permitted to himself? On the Christian Faith 2.6.47.[59]

The Spirit's Will Is One with Father and Son. Bede: When the grace of the Spirit is given to human beings, the Spirit is unquestionably sent by the Father and sent by the Son, and he proceeds from the Father and proceeds from the Son.[60] [The Spirit] also comes of his own accord, because just as he is equal to the Father and the Son, so he has the same will in common with the Father and the Son. Homilies on the Gospels 2.16.[61]

The Sound of the Wind at Pentecost. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He said rightly "you hear the sound of it," because by descending first on the apostles it came with a noise. They heard the sound of a strong wind and spoke different languages through the power of the Spirit that was over them. Thus, after speaking in such lofty language of the generation of the Spirit, he concluded perfectly: "So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit," that is, such is the generation of the Spirit. It cannot be comprehended by the thoughts of humankind. Since it is beyond their grasp, it can only be perceived through its sound for their apprehension. Commentary on John 2.3.7-8.[62]

---

[56]NPNF 1 14:91**. [57]NPNF 2 9:233**. [58]CSCO 4 3:68-69. [59]NPNF 2 10:229*. [60]There will be a much fuller discussion of the Spirit's procession in comments from East and West on Jn 14:26; 15:26. [61]CS 111:150. But see also comments on Jn 15:26. [62]CSCO 4 3:69.

The Spirit Spoke by the Prophets. Ammonius: One hears the voice of the Spirit through the prophets. Fragments on John 77.[63]

Filled with the Holy Spirit. Bede: "The Spirit breathes where he wills" because he has in his power [to choose the] heart he will enlighten by the grace of his visitation. "And you hear his voice" when one filled with the Holy Spirit speaks in your presence. Homilies on the Gospels 2.18.[64]

The Word and Sacrament Are the Sound of the Spirit. Augustine: A father, a man who will one day die, begets through his wife a son to succeed him; God begets from the church sons, not to succeed him but to remain with him. And [the Gospel] continues: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Therefore we are born spiritually, and in the Spirit we are born by word and sacrament. The Spirit is present that we may be born. The Spirit is present invisibly from whom you are born, because you too are born invisibly. For [the Gospel] continues and says, "Do not wonder that I have said to you, 'You must hear his voice but do not know where he comes from or where he goes." No one sees the Spirit. And how do we hear the voice of the Spirit? A psalm sounds forth: it is the Spirit's voice. The gospel sounds forth: it is the Spirit's voice. God's word sounds forth: it is the Spirit's voice. "You hear his voice, but do not know where he comes from or where he goes." But if you too should be born of the Spirit, you will be such that he who is not yet born of the spirit has no idea where you come from or where you go. For he continues and says, "So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." Tractates on the Gospel of John 12.5.[65]

The Spirit Is Not Deceived. Ignatius of Antioch: For though some would have deceived me according to the flesh, yet the Spirit, as being from God, is not deceived. For it knows both where it comes from and where it goes, and it detects the secrets [of the heart]. Epistle to the Philadelphians 7.1.[66]

Manifestations of the Spirit for the Confirmation of Our Faith. Anonymous: The Spirit, indeed, continues to this day invisible to people, as the Lord says, The Spirit breathes where he will, and you know not where it comes from or where it goes." But in the beginning of the mystery of the faith and of spiritual baptism, the same Spirit was manifestly seen to have sat upon the disciples as fire [at Pentecost]. Moreover, when the heavens were opened, the Spirit was seen to have descended upon the Lord like a dove. Many things . . . are shown to the eyes and to the incredulity of people, either partially, or at certain times or in symbols, for the strengthening and confirming of our faith. . . . From all these manifestations it is shown that hearts are purified by faith but that souls are washed by the Spirit. It is further shown that bodies are washed by water and, moreover, that by the blood of Christ we may more readily attain at once to the rewards of salvation. A Treatise on Re-baptism 18.[67]

Human Limits in Receiving the Spirit. Bede: The Spirit comes to the saints [and] goes from the saints, so that they may be refreshed from time to time by the frequently recurring light of the return of him whom they are not capable of having always. However, the Spirit remains continually in the only Mediator between God and human beings, the man Jesus Christ,[68] in whom he does not find any stain of unclean thought, which he would shun. Homilies on the Gospels 1.15.[69]

Analogy Between Wind and Spirit. Chrysostom: Here is the conclusion of the whole matter. If, he says, you do not even know how to explain the motion or path of this wind,[70] which

[63]*JKGK* 216. [64]CCL 122:313; CS 111:181. [65]NPNF 1 7:82-83*. [66]ANF 1:83. [67]ANF 5:677**. [68]1 Tim 2:5. [69]CS 110:153. [70]Or "spirit."

you perceive by hearing and feeling, why are you so over anxious about the working of the divine Spirit, when you do not even understand how the wind works, although you hear its voice? . . . As then the wind is not visible, although it utters a sound, so neither is the birth of that which is spiritual visible to our bodily eyes. And yet, the wind is a body, although a very subtle one. For whatever is the object of our senses is bodily. If then you do not complain when you cannot see this body and you still believe, why, when you hear of "the Spirit," do you hesitate and demand such exact accounts, although you do not act this way in the case of a body? Homilies on the Gospel of John 26.2.[71]

3:9-10 *The Teacher of Israel*

Those Not Born of the Spirit. Augustine: If you are born of the Spirit, you too shall be like the Spirit, that is, that one who is not born of the Spirit does not know where *you* come from or where *you* go. Tractates on the Gospel of John 12.5.[72]

Nicodemus Is Taught Humility. Augustine: Do we think that the Lord meant to insult this master of the Jews? The Lord knew what he was doing. He wanted the man to be born of the Spirit. No one is born of the Spirit if he is not humble, for humility itself makes us born of the Spirit since "the Lord is near to those who are of a broken heart."[73] The man was puffed up with his mastery, and it appeared of some importance to him that he was a teacher of the Jews. Jesus pulled down his pride so that he might be born of the Spirit. Tractates on the Gospel of John 12.6.[74]

As a Teacher of Israel, Nicodemus Should Have Understood Jesus. Chrysostom: Observe how Jesus never accuses Nicodemus of wickedness but only of simplicity and a lack of wisdom. But someone will say: What connection does this birth have with Jewish doctrines? What doesn't it have in common with them? The first man that was made, the woman that was made out of his rib, the barren that bare, the miracles that were worked by means of water, for instance, Elisha's bringing up the iron from the river, the passage of the Red Sea, the pool that the angel troubled and Naaman the Syrian's purification in the Jordan—these were all types and figures of the spiritual birth and purification that would take place in the future. Many passages in the prophets too have a hidden reference to this birth, as for instance . . . "your youth is renewed like the eagle's"[75] . . . and "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven."[76] Isaac also was a type of this birth. . . . Referring to these passages, our Jesus says, "Are you a master in Israel, and you do not know these things?" Homilies on the Gospel of John 26.2.[77]

Types of Cleansing Baptism in the Old Testament. Ephrem the Syrian: Indeed, he [Nicodemus] should have known what came from the Law and the Prophets: the cleansing with hyssop, the waters for ceremonial sprinkling, the baptisms for cleansing, and all the rest. If these had not been signified as types before the coming of the Son, our Lord would have been accusing Nicodemus falsely because of them. But if they were hidden from him in his Scriptures, and he did not clearly identify them, he [our Lord] rightly put to flight his sleep, healed his infirmity by his gentle voice, and reminded him of the baptism of atonement that existed in Israel. . . .

But this was done gently, because he [our Lord] saw that he [Nicodemus] was sick but close to healing. And since he did not understand what was previously written down in the Law, our Lord showed him the baptism of complete atonement for both body and soul. Truly, Nicodemus, did you not perceive that Jacob was born into the right of the firstborn without [the aid of]

[71]NPNF 1 14:91**. [72]NPNF 1 7:83*. [73]See Ps 51:17 (50:19 LXX, Vg). [74]NPNF 1 7:83*. [75]Ps 103:5 (102:5 LXX). [76]Ps 32:1 (31:1 LXX). [77]NPNF 1 14:91-92**.

belly or womb,[78] or that Naaman was renewed apart from a womb when Elisha spoke to him?[79] . . . And likewise for Miriam.[80] Come now, was it not known that this was a sign of baptism given to the nations, for hyssop makes what was stained white? Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 14.13.[81]

3:11 *Not Receiving Testimony*

Teach Only What Your Hearer Can Handle. Cyril of Alexandria: He advises Nicodemus to accept in simple faith what he cannot understand. Jesus testifies that he himself knows clearly what he says because of who he is, and to doubt what he says is a very dangerous thing. For it was not likely that Nicodemus would forget that he had earlier affirmed that our Savior Christ was a "teacher who had come from God." But to resist one who is both from God, and God, is terribly fraught with peril since one is clearly fighting with God. That is why we, who have the authority to teach, should rather provide simple arguments for those who have just come to faith, rather than the more elaborate explanations . . . not applying doctrine indiscriminately but appropriately adapted to what each can handle. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[82]

The Trinitarian Witness. Cyril of Alexandria: Since he has the Father and the Spirit naturally, the Savior set forth the person of the witnesses in the plural number so that, as in the law of Moses,[83] by the mouth of two or three witness what is said may be established. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[84]

3:12 *Earthly Things and Heavenly Things*

Heavenly Things Are Beyond the Reach of Fools. Cyril of Alexandria: If you out of extreme foolishness did not receive a doctrine that does not exceed the understanding human beings are capable of, how can I explain things more divine? For if people are foolish in their own matters, how do they expect to be wise in matters above them? How do those who are powerless in lesser matters expect to find the greater things intolerable? And if, he says, you do not believe me when I speak alone but rather seek many witnesses for everything, whom shall I bring to you as a witness of the heavenly mysteries? Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[85]

The Charge of Unbelief. Chrysostom: Do not be surprised that he calls baptism earthly, for he calls it this either because it is performed on earth or as comparison with his own most awesome birth. For though this birth of ours is heavenly, yet compared with that true birth that is from the substance of the Father, it is earthly.

And he has not said, "You have not understood," but "You have not believed." For when the understanding cannot take in certain truths, we attribute it to our own natural deficiencies or to ignorance. But when a person does not receive things that cannot be apprehended by reasoning but only by faith, the charge against him is no longer lack of understanding but unbelief. . . . These truths, however, were revealed so that posterity might believe and benefit from them, even though the people then did not. Homilies on the Gospel of John 27.1.[86]

78See Gen 25:25. 792 Kings 5:14. 80See Num 12:9-15. 81CB709. 172-74. 82LF 43:171**. 83Deut 19:15. 84LF 43:171**. 85LF 43:172**. 86NPNF 1 14:93**.

GOD'S GIFT REVEALED
JOHN 3:13-21

Overview: The Lord of glory descended from heaven as the Son of man (Ambrose). How is it possible, then, for the Son of man to have "come down" from heaven when he came from the Virgin's womb here on earth (Augustine)? Or perhaps his descent indicates his conception by the Holy Spirit, from whom his body owes its origin (Hilary); or he is using the term "Son of man" to refer to the whole person (Chrysostom). As the ascended Son of God he is the Lord of glory; as the descended Son of man he is crucified. We ascend to heaven as members of the one who descended by taking the form of a servant (Augustine). Ultimately, however, Christ's ascending and descending is a mystery and a paradox that we should not seek to solve (Hilary). It demonstrates the union of the human and the divine in the one person who descends and ascends while still being everywhere (Chrysostom).

As Jesus had previously mentioned baptism, he now proceeds to the source of baptism, that is, the cross (Chrysostom). The brazen serpent is a type of the cross (Ambrose), which was raised up for the entire world to see (Andrew), and on it we see the whole mystery of the incarnation (Cyril of Alexandria). Moses did not teach us to believe in the serpent, which itself was cursed, but to believe in the one who became a curse for us in order to break the power of the serpent (Justin). Because death was from a serpent, it was represented by the brazen image of a serpent in the account in Numbers (Bede); in its very brazenness, it could not die (Ephrem). Whoever has been bitten by the snakes of sin needs only to gaze on Christ and there will be healing for the forgiveness of sins (Augustine) and eternal life because he is the author and cause of life (Chrysostom).

This text shows the intensity of God's love (Chrysostom) who, as the great Physician, stoops to heal our festering wounds (Gregory of Nazianzus). God's Son was a priceless gift to the world from the Father who gave not an adopted son but his only begotten Son (Hilary, Isaac). This is what Abraham had done as well; the symbols of the wood and the lamb continued to testify to that love of a father for his children (Ephrem). In giving his Son to the world, the Father gave life itself—the only gift that can defeat death (Augustine) and restore

what we had lost (Bede). However, since it is a gift, he will not force salvation on people (Augustine).

There are those who presume on God's mercy, forgetting that the first advent of Christ was for our pardon, but the second is for judgment (Chrysostom). Unbelief has already been judged (Hilary), and those who are impenitent already feel its effects since they are without the light (Chrysostom). The judgment that is yet to come, therefore, does not concern unbelief so much as those who profess faith but have no works to back up that profession of faith (Gregory the Great). We sin against God under our own power (Clement). Thus our separation from God is our own doing (Irenaeus).

The light came to them, but they refused its illumination (Chrysostom), preferring to exercise the power they have to reject such divine illumination (Cyril of Alexandria) and remain in their wickedness (Chrysostom) through their free reason, which enslaves them without Christ (Apollinaris). They have a love-hate relationship with the truth—they love it when they are not deceived and falsehood is exposed, but hate it when the light exposes them for who and what they really are (Augustine). Light is the worst enemy for those who choose to remain in wickedness and rebellion (Chrysostom). The good rejoice in being seen (Tertullian), not because they are proud of their good works but because they want others to see what God has done in them (Augustine).

3:13 *The One Who Ascended and Descended*

Both Natures Descend and Ascend. Ambrose: Possessing both natures, that is, the human and the divine, [Christ] endured the passion in his humanity, in order that without distinction he who suffered should be called both Lord of glory and Son of man, even as it is written: "Who descended from heaven."On the Christian Faith 2.7.58.[1]

In Heaven and from Heaven. Augustine: Some people, certainly, find very surprising what the Lord said in the Gospel, "Nobody has ascended into heaven, except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven." How, they ask, can the Son of man be said to have come down from heaven, when it was here that he was taken on in the Virgin's womb? People who say this are not to be rejected but instructed. I think, you see, that they are raising this question out of piety but are not yet able to understand what they are inquiring about. They do not realize, I mean, that the divinity took on the humanity in such a way as to become one person, God and man; and that the humanity was attached to the divinity in such a way that Word, soul and flesh were the one Christ. And that is why it could be said, "No one has ascended into heaven, except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven." Sermon 265b.2.[2]

His Descent Is His Conception by the Spirit. Hilary of Poitiers: "Descended from heaven" refers to his origin from the Spirit. For though Mary contributed to his growth in the womb and birth all that is natural to her sex, his body did not owe to her its origin. The "Son of man" refers to the birth of the flesh conceived in the Virgin; "who is in heaven" implies the power of his eternal nature—an infinite nature, which could not restrict itself to the limits of the body—of which it was itself the source and base. By the virtue of the Spirit and the power of God the Word, though he sojourned in the form of a servant, he was ever present as Lord of all within and beyond the circle of heaven and earth. So he descended from heaven and is the Son of man, yet is in heaven. For the Word made flesh did not cease to be the Word. As the Word, he is in heaven, as flesh he is the Son of man. As Word made flesh, he is at once from heaven, and Son of man and in heaven. For the power of the Word,

[1]NPNF 2 10:230-31. [2]*WSA* 3 7:249.

abiding eternally without body, was present still in the heaven he had left. The flesh owed its origin to him and to no one else. So the Word made flesh, though he was flesh, nonetheless never ceased to be the Word. On the Trinity 10.16.[3]

Son of Man Stands for the Whole Person. Chrysostom: And in this place he does not refer only to the flesh as "Son of man" but now names, so to speak, his entire self from the inferior substance. Indeed, he often likes to do this, referring to his whole person from either his divinity or his humanity. Homilies on the Gospel of John 27.1.[4]

In Both Natures. Augustine: As a human being he was on earth, not in heaven where he now is . . . although in his nature as Son of God he was in heaven, but as Son of man he was still on earth and had not yet ascended into heaven. In a similar way, although in his nature as Son of God he is the Lord of glory, in his nature as Son of man he was crucified. Letter 187.9.[5]

He Descended So That We Might Ascend. Augustine: Spiritual birth happens when human beings, being earthly, become heavenly. And this can only happen when they are made members of me. So that he may ascend who descended, since no one ascends who did not descend. Therefore everyone who needs to be changed and raised must meet together in a union with Christ so that the Christ who descended may ascend, considering his body (that is to say, his church)[6] as nothing other than himself. On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and on Infant Baptism 1.60.[7]

The Mystery of Christ Ascending and Descending. Hilary of Poitiers: It is not possible by the laws of bodies for the same object to remain and to descend. The one is the change of downward motion, the other the stillness of being at rest. The infant wails but is in heaven: the boy grows but remains ever the immeasurable God. By what perception of human understanding can we comprehend that he ascended where he was before, and he descended who remained in heaven? The Lord says, "What if you should behold the Son of man ascending to where he was before?"[8] The Son of man ascends where he was before. Can sense apprehend this? The Son of man—who is in heaven—descends from heaven. Can reason cope with this? The Word was made flesh—can words express this? The Word becomes flesh, that is, God becomes man. The man is in heaven: the God is from heaven. He ascends who descended, but he descends and yet does not descend. He is as he ever was, yet he was not ever what he is. We pass in review of the causes, but we cannot explain the manner. We perceive the manner but cannot understand the causes. Yet, if we understand Christ Jesus even in this way, we shall know him. If we seek to understand him further, we shall not know him at all. On the Trinity 10.54.[9]

Christ Is Everywhere. Chrysostom: See how even what appears very exalted is utterly unworthy of his greatness? For he is not in heaven only but everywhere, and he fills all things. But here he still speaks according to the infirmity of his hearer in the hope that he can lead him up little by little. Homilies on the Gospel of John 27.1.[10]

3:14 *Lifting Up the Serpent, Lifting Up the Son of Man*

The Cross as Source of Baptism. Chrysostom: Having made mention of the gift of baptism, he proceeds to the source[11] of it, that is, the cross. . . . These two things, more than anything else, declare his unspeakable love: that he both suffered for his enemies and, having died for his

[3]NPNF 2 9:186. [4]NPNF 1 14:94**. [5]FC 30:227-28**. Theodoret makes this same point about the two natures; see *Eranistes* (FC 106:79). [6]See also Bede *Homilies on the Gospels* 2.18. [7]NPNF 1 5:39*. See also *Sermon* 362.16 and Gregory *Morals on the Book of Job* 27.15.30 (LF 23:221). [8]Jn 6:62. [9]NPNF 2 9:197. [10]NPNF 1 14:94**. [11]Or "cause."

enemies, he freely gave them by baptism the entire forgiveness of all of their sins. Homilies on the Gospel of John 27.1.[12]

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus the Spiritual Sense of the Law. Bede: With the wonderful skill of heavenly teaching, the Lord directs our attention to the teacher of the Mosaic law and to the spiritual meaning of his law, by recalling some of the ancient history and explaining that it happened as a figure of his own passion and of human salvation. Homilies on the Gospels 2.18.[13]

The Brazen Serpent Is a Type of Christ's Humanity. Ambrose: It was good that the Lord ordained that, by the lifting up of the brazen serpent, the wounds of those who were bitten should be healed; for the brazen serpent is a type of the cross. . . . In the same way, the world was crucified in its allurements. Therefore not a real but a brazen serpent was hung. This is so because the Lord took on himself the likeness of a sinner in his body but, in actuality, was without sin. In this way, he imitated a serpent through the deceitful appearance of human weakness, so that when he laid aside the slough of the flesh, he might destroy the cunning of the true serpent. On the Holy Spirit 3.8.50.[14]

The Cross Raised for All the World to See. Andrew of Crete: The cross is raised and appears above the earth, which until recently malice had kept hidden. It is raised, not to receive glory (for with Christ nailed to it what greater glory could it have?) but to give glory to God who is worshiped on it and proclaimed by it. . . . It is not surprising that the church rejoices in the cross of Christ and robes herself in festal clothes, revealing her bridal beauty as she honors this day. Nor is it surprising that this great throng of people has gathered together today to see the cross exposed aloft and to worship Christ whom they see raised upon it. For the cross is exposed in order to be raised and is raised to be exposed. What cross? The cross, which a little while ago was hidden in a place called The Skull but now is everywhere adored. This is what we rejoice over today; this is what we celebrate; this is the point of the present feast; this is the manifestation of the mystery. . . . For this hidden and life-giving cross had to be exposed, set on high like a city on a hill or a lamp on a stand, for all the world to see. Homily 11 on the Exaltation of the Venerable Cross.[15]

The Story of Moses and the Brass Serpent. Cyril of Alexandria: This story is a type of the whole mystery of the incarnation. For the serpent signifies bitter and deadly sin, which was devouring the whole race on the earth . . . biting the Soul of man and infusing it with the venom of wickedness. And there is no way that we could have escaped being conquered by it, except by the relief that comes only from heaven. The Word of God then was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, "that he might condemn sin in the flesh,"[16] as it is written. In this way, he becomes the Giver of unending salvation to those who comprehend the divine doctrines and gaze on him with steadfast faith. But the serpent, being fixed upon a lofty base, signifies that Christ was clearly manifested by his passion on the cross, so that none could fail to see him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[17]

The Crucified Brings Death to the Serpent. Justin Martyr: It seems that the type and sign that was erected to counteract the serpents that bit Israel was intended for the salvation of those who believe that death was declared to come thereafter on the serpent through him who would be crucified. But salvation was to come to those who had been bitten by him and had committed themselves to him who sent his Son into the world to be crucified. For the Spirit of prophecy by Moses did not teach us to believe

[12]NPNF 1 14:94**. [13]CS 111:184. [14]NPNF 2 10:142*. [15]*JFA* 156; PG 97:1036-40. [16]Rom 8:3. [17]LF 43:173**.

in the serpent, since it shows us that he was cursed by God from the beginning. And in Isaiah he tells us that he shall be put to death as an enemy by the mighty sword, which is Christ. Dialogue with Trypho 91.[18]

The Crucified Saves Those Living Under a Curse. Justin Martyr: By this [lifting up of the serpent], he proclaimed the mystery where he declared that he would break the power of the serpent, which occasioned the transgression of Adam. He [would bring] salvation to those who believe on him because of this sign (i.e., his crucifixion)—salvation from the fangs of the serpent, which are wicked deeds, idolatries and other unrighteous acts. . . . Just as God commanded the sign to be made by the brazen serpent—and yet he is blameless—even so, though a curse lies in the law against persons who are crucified, yet no curse lies on the Christ of God, by whom all that have committed things worthy of a curse are saved.[19] Dialogue with Trypho 94.[20]

Restored to Life Everlasting. Bede: The sins that drag down soul and body to destruction at the same time are appropriately represented by the serpents, not only because they were fiery and poisonous [and] artful at bringing about death, but also because our first parents were led into sin by a serpent. And from being immortal they became mortal by sinning. The Lord is aptly made known by the bronze serpent, since he came in the likeness of sinful flesh. Just as the bronze serpent had the likeness of a fiery serpent but had absolutely none of the strength of harmful poison in its members—rather by being lifted up it cured those who had been stricken by the [live] serpents—so the Redeemer of the human race did not clothe himself in sinful flesh but in the likeness of sinful flesh, in order that by suffering death on the cross in [this likeness] he might free those who believed in him from all sin and even from death itself.

Just as those who looked at the bronze serpent that had been lifted up as a sign were cured at that time from temporal death and the wounds that the serpents' bites had caused, so too those who look at the mystery of the Lord's passion by believing, confessing [and] sincerely imitating it are saved forever from every death they have incurred by sinning in mind and body. Homilies on the Gospels 2.18.[21]

The Nature of the Brazen Serpent Like That of Christ. Ephrem the Syrian: It was shown by the brazen [serpent], which by its nature cannot suffer, that he would suffer on the cross, who by his nature cannot die. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 14.15.[22]

The Symbolism Explained. Augustine: Let me try to explain, as far as the Lord enables me to, what these signs mean. The rod stands for the kingdom, the snake for mortality. It was by the snake that humanity was given death to drink. The Lord was prepared to take this death on himself. So when the rod came down to earth it had the form of a snake because the kingdom of God, which is Jesus Christ, came down to earth. He put on mortality, which he also nailed to the cross. . . . In his mercy God provided a remedy, a remedy that restored health at the time but also foretold the wisdom that was to come in the future. . . . Whoever has been bitten by the snakes of sin need only gaze on Christ and will have healing for the forgiveness of sins. And so, brothers, it is the mortality that the Lord took on himself that the church must go on experiencing as his body, of which he is the head, as man, in heaven. So the church experiences mortality, which was inflicted through the seduction of the serpent. We owe death to the sin of the first persons, but afterward we shall reach eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. But when does the church arrive at life and return to the kingdom? At the end of the world. That is why he took it by the tail, which is the end, in order to

[18]ANF 1:245. [19]Gal 3:13. [20]ANF 1:246-47**. [21]CS 111:184-85. [22]CB709:176.

restore his rod to its original condition. Sermon 6.7.[23]

3:15-16 *God's Gift of His Son for Life*

The Life-Giving Passion. Chrysostom: He says that the one who was given was "the Son of God," and he is the cause of life—of everlasting life. He who procured life for others by death would not himself be continually in death. For if those who believed on the crucified did not perish, much less does the one perish who is crucified. He who takes away the destitution of others is that much freer from it. He who gives life to others brings forth even more life to himself. Homilies on the Gospel of John 27.2.[24]

The Intensity of God's Love and Our Response. Chrysostom: The text, "God so loved the world," shows such an intensity of love. For great indeed and infinite is the distance between the two. The immortal, the infinite majesty without beginning or end loved those who were but dust and ashes, who were loaded with ten thousand sins but remained ungrateful even as they constantly offended him. This is who he "loved." For God did not give a servant, or an angel or even an archangel "but his only begotten Son." And yet no one would show such anxiety even for his own child as God did for his ungrateful servants. . . .

He laid down his life for us and poured forth his precious blood for our sakes—even though there is nothing good in us—while we do not even pour out our money for our own sake and neglect him who died for us when he is naked and a stranger. . . . We put gold necklaces on ourselves and even on our pets but neglect our Lord who goes about naked and passes from door to door. . . . He gladly goes hungry so that you may be fed; naked so that he may provide you with the materials for a garment of incorruption, yet we will not even give up any of our own food or clothing for him. . . . These things I say continually, and I will not cease to say them, not so much because I care for the poor but because I care for your souls. Homilies on the Gospel of John 27.2-3.[25]

The Great Physician Stoops to Heal My Festering Wounds. Gregory of Nazianzus: Let us praise the Son first of all, venerating the blood that expiated our sins. He lost nothing of his divinity when he saved me, when like a good physician he stooped to my festering wounds. He was a mortal man, but he was also God. He was of the race of David but Adam's creator. He who has no body clothed himself with flesh. He had a mother who, nonetheless, was a virgin. He who is without bounds bound himself with the cords of our humanity. He was victim and high priest—yet he was God. He offered up his blood and cleansed the whole world. He was lifted up on the cross, but it was sin that was nailed to it. He became as one among the dead, but he rose from the dead, raising to life also many who had died before him. On the one hand, there was the poverty of his humanity; on the other, the riches of his divinity. Do not let what is human in the Son permit you wrongfully to detract from what is divine. For the sake of the divine, hold in the greatest honor the humanity, which the immortal Son took on himself for love of you. Poem 2.[26]

Gifts of Price Are Evidence of Affection. Hilary of Poitiers: God, who loved the world, gave his only begotten Son as a manifest token of his love. If the evidence of his love is this, that he bestowed a creature on creatures, gave a worldly being on the world's behalf, granted one raised up from nothing for the redemption of objects equally raised up from nothing, such a cheap and petty sacrifice is a poor assurance of his favor toward us. Gifts of price are the evidence of affection: the greatness of the surrender is evidence of the greatness of the love. God, who loved the world, gave no adopted son

[23]*WSA* 3 1:229-30. [24]NPNF 1 14:95. [25]NPNF 1 14:95-96**. [26]*JFA*:74-75; PG 37:401, 406-8.

but his own, his only begotten [Son]. Here is personal interest, true sonship, sincerity; not creation, or adoption, or pretence. Here is the proof of his love and affection, that he gave his own, his only begotten Son. On the Trinity 6.40.[27]

He Gave What Was Most Precious to Show His Abundant Love. Isaac of Nineveh: The sum of all is God, the Lord of all, who from love of his creatures has delivered his Son to death on the cross. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for it. Not that he was unable to save us in another way, but in this way it was possible to show us his abundant love abundantly, namely, by bringing us near to him by the death of his Son. If he had anything more dear to him, he would have given it to us, in order that by it our race might be his. And out of his great love he did not even choose to urge our freedom by compulsion, though he was able to do so. But his aim was that we should come near to him by the love of our mind. And our Lord obeyed his Father out of love for us. Ascetical Homily 74.[28]

The Precedent of Love with Abraham and Isaac. Ephrem the Syrian: Abraham had many servants. Why did he [God] not tell him to offer up one of them as a sacrifice? It was only because his love would not be shown in a servant. His son was thus needed, so that through him Abraham's love would be revealed.[29] God had servants like this, but he did not show his love through any of them for his creatures, but rather through his Son, so that through him his love toward us might be proclaimed. . . .

From [the time of] Abraham, the symbols of the wood and of the lamb began to take shape. Isaac was a symbol of the lamb [caught] in the tree,[30] and Jacob showed the wood that was life-giving for water.[31] Thus wood was esteemed as worthy for him to hang upon it, because not a bone in him was broken.[32] As for the earth, its fruits are stimulated by wood, and for the sea, its treasures are taken by means of wood. This is also the case for the body and the soul.[33] Thus it [the wood of the cross] was carved by the fury of the savage crowd. It was like a mute person in its silence, but in its use it bore fruit exalting the status of human beings. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 21.7, 9.[34]

Christ the Life of the World. Augustine: Unless the Father, you see, had handed over life, we would not have had life. And unless life itself had died, death would not have been slain. It is the Lord Christ himself, of course, that is life, about whom John the Evangelist says, "This is the true God and eternal life."[35] It was he himself that through the prophet had also threatened death with death, saying, "I will be your death, O death; I will be your sting."[36] This was as though he had said, "I will slay you by dying. I will swallow you up. I will take all your power away from you. I will rescue the captives you have held. You wanted to hold me, though innocent. It is right that you should lose those you had the power to hold." Sermon 265b.4.[37]

Restoration to What We Were Created to Be. Bede: Our Redeemer and Maker, who was Son of God before the ages, became Son of man at the end of ages. Thus the one who, through the power of his divinity, had created us to enjoy the happiness of everlasting life, might himself restore us, through the weakness of our humanity, to recover the life we had lost. Homilies on the Gospels 2.18.[38]

3:17 *God Sent His Son Not to Condemn but to Save*

Resisting the Physician's Help. Augustine: As far as it lies in the power of the physi-

[27]NPNF 2 9:113. [28]*MTIN* 442-43. [29]See Gen 22:1-18. [30]See Gen 22:1-13. [31]See Gen 30:37-42. [32]See Jn 19:33-36. [33]This enigmatic phrase is explained in McCarthy's text by Sebastian Brock, "So too, body and soul need the wood of the cross." [34]CB709:212. [35]1 Jn 5:20. [36]Hos 13:14. [37]*WSA* 3 7:250. [38]CS 111:186.

cian, he has come to heal the sick. Whoever does not observe his orders destroys himself. . . . Why would he be called the Savior of the world unless he saves the world? Tractates on the Gospel of John 12.12.[39]

Two Advents: Pardon and Judgment. Chrysostom: Many of the more careless sort, using the loving kindness of God to increase the magnitude of their sins and the excess of their disregard, speak in this way, saying: There is no hell, no future punishment. God forgives all our sins. . . .

But let us remember that there are two advents of Christ, one past, the other to come. The first was not to judge but to pardon us. The second will be not to pardon but to judge us. It is of the first that he says, "I have not come to judge the world but to save the world." But of the second he says, "When the Son shall come in the glory of his Father, he will set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left."[40] And the sheep will go into life and the goats into eternal punishment. . . . But because he is merciful, for a time he pardons instead of judging. For if he had judged immediately, everyone would have been rushed into perdition, for "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."[41] Don't you see the unspeakable surplus of his loving kindness? Homilies on the Gospel of John 28.1.[42]

3:18 *Those Who Do Not Believe Are Condemned Already*

There Is No Need to Judge Believers. Hilary of Poitiers: "He who believes," says Christ, "is not judged." And is there any need to judge a believer? Judgment arises out of ambiguity, and where ambiguity ceases, there is no call for trial and judgment. And so, not even unbelievers need to be judged, because there is no doubt about their being unbelievers. But after exempting believers and unbelievers alike from judgment, the Lord added a case for judgment of the human agents on whom it must be exercised. For there are some who stand midway between the godly and the ungodly, having affinities to both but strictly belonging to neither class, because they have come to be what they are by a combination of the two. . . . For many are kept within the pale of the church by the fear of God, yet they are tempted all the while to worldly faults by the allurements of the world. They pray, because they are afraid; they sin, because it is their will. . . . These, then, are they whom the judgment awaits that unbelievers have already had passed on them and believers do not need. Homily on Psalm 1.21-22.[43]

Disbelief Itself Is the Punishment. Chrysostom: He either means that disbelief itself is the punishment of the impenitent, insofar as being impenitent is to be without light, and to be without light is of itself the greatest punishment. Or he is announcing beforehand what is to be. Even if a murderer is not yet sentenced by the judge, still his crime has already condemned him. In the same way, he who does not believe is dead, even as Adam, on the day that he ate of the tree, died.[44] Homilies on the Gospel of John 28.1.[45]

The Day of Judgment. Gregory the Great: In the last judgment some perish without being judged. It says here of those . . . "He who does not believe is condemned already." . . . Therefore, even all unbelievers rise again, but they rise to torment, not to judgment. For the day of judgment does not try those who are already banished from the sight of a discerning judge because of their unbelief. Rather, it tries those who, retaining the profession of faith, have no works to show that back up that profession. For those who have not kept even the sacraments of faith do not even hear the curse of the Judge at the last trial. They have already, in the darkness of their unbelief, received their sentence and are not thought worthy of being convicted by the rebuke of him

[39]NPNF 1 7:85**. [40]Mt 25:31, 33. [41]Rom 3:23. [42]NPNF 1 14:96-97**. [43]NPNF 2 9:241-42**. [44]Gen 2:17 LXX. [45]NPNF 1 14:97**.

whom they had despised again. . . . For an earthly sovereign, in the government of his state, has a different rule of punishment in the case of the disaffected subject and the foreign rebel. In the former case he consults the civil law, but against the enemy he proceeds at once to war and repays his malice with the punishment it deserves without referencing the law, inasmuch as he who never submitted to law has no claim to suffer by the law. Morals on the Book of Job 26.27.50.[46]

Sins and Transgressions in Our Own Power. Clement of Alexandria: The prophet says with justification, "The ungodly are not so, but as the chaff that the wind drives away from the face of the earth. And so, the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment"[47] because they are already condemned since "those who do not believe are condemned already." "Nor do sinners sit in the counsel of the righteous," inasmuch as they too are already condemned and are not united to those who have lived without stumbling. "For the Lord knows the way of the righteous; and the way of the ungodly shall perish."[48] Again, the Lord clearly shows sins and transgression to be in our own power. Stromateis 2.15.[49]

Separation from God Is Self-Inflicted. Irenaeus: Separation from God is death, and separation from light is darkness. Separation from God consists in the loss of all the benefits that he has in store. . . . This is the same thing that happens in the case of a flood of light: those who have blinded themselves or have been blinded by others are forever deprived of the enjoyment of light. It is not that the light has inflicted on them the penalty of blindness, but it is that the blindness itself has brought calamity on them. Therefore the Lord declared, "He who believes in me is not condemned," that is, he is not separated from God, for he is united to God through faith. On the other hand, he says, "He who believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," that is, he has separated himself from God by his own doing. Against Heresies 5.27.2.[50]

3:19 *Condemnation of Those Who Love Darkness*

The Light Comes to Them, but They Refuse. Chrysostom: They are punished because they would not leave the darkness and hurry to the light. . . . Had I come to demand an accounting of their deeds, they might have been able to say that was the reason they stayed away. But now I have come to free them from the darkness and to bring them to the light. Who can pity the person who does not choose to approach the light when it comes to him but would rather remain in the darkness? Homilies on the Gospel of John 28.2.[51]

The Power to Determine Our Own Punishment. Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus says that unbelievers had the opportunity to be illuminated but preferred to remain in darkness. Such people, in fact, by failing to choose enlightenment, determine their own punishment against themselves and provoke their own suffering, which was in their power to escape. God preserved human freedom so that people might justly receive praise for good things and punishment for the contrary. As indeed he shows in another place, saying, "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword."[52] Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[53]

Choosing to Remain in Wickedness. Chrysostom: Then, because it seemed incredible that someone should prefer the light to darkness, he gives the reason for the infatuation, that is, that their deeds were evil. . . . Indeed, if he had

[46]LF 23:171-72**. [47]Ps 1:4-5. [48]Ps 1:5-6. [49]ANF 2:363*. [50]SC 153:342-46; ANF 1:556**. [51]NPNF 1 14:97**. [52]Is 1:19-20. [53]LF 43:177**.

come for judgment, there would have at least been a reason for not receiving him because one who is conscious of his crimes naturally avoids the judge. But criminals practically run to meet one who brings them pardon. Therefore, it might have been expected that those who are conscious of their sins would have gone to meet Christ, as many indeed did. Publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus. . . . But the majority was too cowardly to undergo the work of virtue for righteousness' sake, and they persisted in their wickedness to the end. . . . They are always doing evil and looking for ways to roll around in the mire of sin, with no desire to subject themselves to my laws. Homilies on the Gospel of John 28.2.[54]

The Enslaving Power of Free Reason. Apollinaris of Laodicea: Those who love darkness instead of the light have no excuse. They did not fail to believe Christ because of their ignorance but because they wanted to do what is evil, which Christ's teaching would not permit. Then, whenever we hear "they could not believe," let us understand this as not referring to the ability of their nature or to their subjugation to someone else but to their own free reason, which enslaved them to dishonorable passions, not wanting to let them revolt from their very base habits. For these know "the light," but do not come to it, in case they might be convicted for their hypocrisy for saying that they know God while denying him by their actions. Fragments on John 14.[55]

3:20 *Evildoers Hate the Light*

Love-Hate Relationship with the Truth. Augustine: People love truth when it shines on them and hate it when it rebukes them. For, because they are not willing to be deceived but definitely want to practice the art of deception, they love truth when it reveals itself and hate it when it reveals them. Because of this, truth shall requite them in such a way that those who were unwilling to be discovered by it are not only discovered by it against their will but also without revealing itself to them. This is the way the human mind, so blind and sick, so base and unseemly, desires to lie concealed but still not wanting anything to be concealed from it. Instead, it receives quite the opposite—not only is it not concealed from the truth, but the truth is concealed from it. Yet, even while it is as wretched as that, it still ultimately prefers to rejoice in truth rather than in falsehood. It looks forward to the day when, without any further trouble intervening, it will rejoice in that one truth by whom everything else is true. Confessions 10.23.34.[56]

Those Infatuated with Wickedness Hate the Light. Chrysostom: He said this about those who choose to remain in wickedness all the time. He indeed came so that he might forgive our former sins and secure them against those sins to come. But since there are some so relaxed, so powerless when it comes to virtue that they remain infatuated with wickedness until their dying breath, he reflects here on these kinds of people. For since, he says, the profession of Christianity requires a sound way of life besides right doctrine, they are afraid to come over to us because they would rather not have to live a righteous life. On the other hand, no one can blame a heathen because, with the kinds of gods he has and the foul and ridiculous rites that go along with those gods, his actions suit his doctrines. But those who belong to the true God, if they live a careless life, everyone will call them to account and accuse them. Even its enemies admire its truth. Observe, then, how exactly Jesus lays out what he is saying. His expression is not "the one who has done evil does not come to the light" but "the one who does it all the time, who desires always to roll himself in the mire of sin—this is the one who will not subject himself to my laws but chooses to stay outside and commit fornication without fear and do all kinds of other

[54]NPNF 1 14:97-98**. [55]*JKGK* 9. [56]NPNF 1 1:152**.

forbidden things. For if he comes to me, the light exposes him as a thief, which is why he avoids my dominion." Homilies on the Gospel of John 28.2.[57]

3:21 *That Their Deeds May Be Known*

The Good Rejoices in Being Seen. Tertullian: The things that make us luminaries of the world are these—our good works. What is good, moreover (provided it is true and full), does not love darkness: it rejoices in being seen and exults over the very recognition it receives. To Christian modesty it is not enough to be so but to also appear so. For its fullness should be so great that it flows out from the mind to the clothing and bursts out from the conscience to the outward appearance. On the Dress of Women 2.13.[58]

Not One's Own Merits. Augustine: He declares that the works of the one who comes to the light are wrought in God, because he is quite aware that his justification results from no merits of his own but from the grace of God. On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and on Infant Baptism 1.62.[59]

Hate Your Own Work; Love the Work of God in You. Augustine: But if God has discovered everyone's works to be evil, how is it that any have done the truth and come to the light? . . . Now what [Jesus] said is that they "loved darkness rather than light." He lays the emphasis on that. Many have loved their sins. Many also have confessed them. . . . God accuses your sins, and if you accuse them too, you are joined to God. . . . You must hate your own work and love the work of God in you. And when your own deeds begin to displease you, that is when your good works begin as you begin to find fault with your evil works. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works, and then you do the truth and come to the light. How do you do the truth? You do not soothe or flatter yourself or say, "I am righteous," while in actuality you are unrighteous. This is how you begin to do the truth. You come to the light so that your works may be shown to originate in God. And you have come to the light because this very sin in you, which displeases you, would not displease you if God did not shine on you and his truth show it to you. But the one who loves his sin, even after being admonished, hates the light admonishing him and flees from it so that his works that he loves may not be proved to be evil. . . . For little sins, if allowed to accumulate, lead to death. Little drops swell the river. Little grains of sand become a heap that presses and weighs down. The sea coming in little by little, unless it is pumped out, sinks the ship. And what does it mean "to pump out," except that you do good works, mourn, fast, give and forgive so that sins do not overwhelm you? Tractates on the Gospel of John 12.13-14.[60]

---

[57]NPNF 1 14:98**. [58]CCL 1:369; ANF 4:25*. [59]NPNF 1 5:40**. [60]NPNF 1 7:85-86**.

John's Testimony
John 3:22-36

Overview: Jesus, as the truth, does not seek concealment but heads straight for Jerusalem and then the Jordan, where large crowds would be gathered and helped by him. The text says that he was baptizing, but it is clear further on that it was his disciples who baptized (Chrysostom). The Evangelist mentions John was not in prison yet, an indication that he records events here and earlier that the other Evangelists had left out, since they mention events that occurred after John was thrown into prison (Eusebius). Note also that when Jesus' disciples had begun baptizing, John did not stop baptizing, but John did not want to exacerbate the rivalry that was already inherent between the two groups (Chrysostom). John's disciples defended his baptism when it seemed that the Jews were asserting that Christ was the greater of the two (Augustine). They still considered Christ as one of their rank and only a disciple of John who was not worthy of carrying on a separate ministry of baptism. Implicit in John's answer, however, is that Christ is God and so deserves the honor he receives (Chrysostom), while John, as a mere man, is able to give only what he has received from heaven (Augustine). We too should be content with what we have received rather than striving for more (Cyril of Alexandria). John maintains his role as a servant despite what his disciples claim to the contrary (Chrysostom).

Jesus is the bridegroom; John the Baptist is the friend of the bridegroom who rejoices because the bridegroom replaces the harsh penalties and torments of the law with forgiveness and a wedding feast (Ambrose). John refers to himself as the friend of the bridegroom rather than servant since on the occasion of a wedding the servants are never as happy as the friends (Chrysostom). The friend's task is to prepare the bride, that is, the church, for the bridegroom's coming by keeping the bride pure as a virgin (Bede). While John recognizes that the church is not his spouse, he still rejoices that the bride recognizes her spouse (Augustine). The church is wedded to God by "the voice" since "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Chrysostom). And thus John, who is the voice, serves as a model of humility in maintaining the focus on the bridegroom rather than on himself, while not seeking to usurp the bridegroom's role (Augustine).

John's role diminishes as Christ increases

(Bede). Christ did not increase in his divinity, but he did increase according to his humanity, and he increases in us as we grow in our understanding and apprehension of him (Augustine). John again speaks of the one who comes from above, who is superior because of his oneness with the Father (Cyril of Alexandria), but his disciple's pride in themselves and in John would not easily be subdued (Chrysostom). John speaks of his teaching as simple, of the earth—human (Augustine)—in comparison with the wisdom of Christ, which comes from above. Christ testifies to things our senses could never comprehend (Chrysostom), but when we accept by faith what he says, our faith, in turn, testifies to his truthfulness (Cyril of Alexandria).

The Son was sent from the Father as the uttered Word (Augustine). Christ himself has and receives the Spirit without measure (Ammonius), while we have the Spirit measured out to us (Chrysostom, Augustine). The Father has, in fact, given everything to the Son and so, in sending the Son, ultimately sends himself (Augustine). But we should not think that the Son never had what the Father gives, since the Son has eternally what the Father has (Athanasius), although as man, he will receive all things when he comes again (Ammonius).

Jesus concludes this section with the threat of punishment because the majority of people are motivated by threats more than by promises (Chrysostom). Faith causes the wrath of God to leave (Ambrose), but those who do not believe will be abandoned instead of being healed (Augustine). Both believers and unbelievers will be resurrected, but the unbelievers will not be living so much as existing in a punishment more bitter than death (Cyril of Alexandria).

3:22 *Jesus Goes into Judea*

Jesus Not Afraid to Go to Judea. Chrysostom: Nothing can be clearer or bolder than truth. . . . It neither seeks concealment nor avoids danger, it fears no plots or cares for popularity. It is subject to no human weakness. . . . Our Lord went up to Jerusalem at the feasts to teach the people and help them through his miracles. After the festival he often visited the crowds who were gathered at the Jordan, choosing the most crowded places, not ostentatiously or out of love of honor but because he wanted to help the greatest number of people. Homilies on the Gospel of John 29.1.[1]

Jesus' Disciples Baptized. Chrysostom: The Evangelist says further on that Jesus did not baptize, but his disciples did. . . . He had not yet given the Spirit, and so there was a good reason why he did not baptize. But his disciples did because they wanted to bring as many to faith as possible. Homilies on the Gospel of John 29.1.[2]

3:23-24 *John Was Not Yet Imprisoned*

Recording Events Before the Imprisonment of John. Eusebius of Caesarea: For it is evident that the three Evangelists recorded only the deeds done by the Savior for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist and indicated this in the beginning of their account. . . . They say, therefore, that the apostle John, being asked to do it for this reason, gave in his Gospel an account of the period that had been omitted by the earlier Evangelists and of the deeds done by the Savior during that period; that is, of those that were done before the imprisonment of the Baptist. And this is indicated by him, they say, in the following words: "This was the beginning of the miracles that Jesus did";[3] and again when he refers to the Baptist, in the midst of the deeds of Jesus, as still baptizing in Aenon near Salim. . . . "For John was not yet cast into prison." John accordingly, in his Gospel, records the deeds of Christ that were performed before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three Evangelists mention the events that happened after that time. Ecclesiastical History 3.24.8-12.[4]

[1]NPNF 1 14:99-100**. [2]NPNF 1 14:100**. [3]Jn 2:11. [4]NPNF 2 1:153*.

3:25 *A Dispute Among John's Disciples*

Why Did John Continue to Baptize? Chrysostom: Why, when the disciples of Jesus were baptizing, didn't John stop baptizing? Why did he continue even until he was led to prison? . . . He would have made the disciples of Jesus seem the more revered if he had stopped when they began. . . . But he did so because he did not want to excite his own disciples to an even stronger rivalry and contention than there already was between the two. For even if he had proclaimed Christ ten thousand times and given him the chief place, making himself much more the inferior, he still would not have been able to persuade his disciples to run to Christ. In fact, they would have most likely become more hostile. This is why Christ began to preach more constantly once John was removed. Indeed, the reason, I think, why John's death was permitted and Christ was made the great preacher in his place was so that the people might transfer their affections entirely to Christ and no longer be divided between the two. . . .

Instead, by continuing to preach, John received no glory for himself but sent hearers to Christ. And he was better able to do this service than Christ's own disciples were. This is because his testimony was so free from suspicion and his reputation with the people so much higher than theirs. . . .

But if anyone asks how the disciples' baptism was better than John's, we reply that it was not. Both alike were without the gift of the Spirit, both parties alike had one reason for baptizing, that is, to lead the baptized to Christ. . . . That the baptisms had no superiority over one another is shown by what follows [in the dispute]. . . .

For the disciples of John did become so envious of Christ's disciples, and even of Christ himself, that when they saw the latter baptizing, they threw contempt on their baptism as being inferior to that of John's. And they tried to persuade one of those who were baptized of this but were not successful. That it was they who began the dispute, and not the Jews, the Evangelist implies by saying that "there arose a question from John's disciples with a certain Jew," instead of saying, "A certain Jew posed a question." Homilies on the Gospel of John 29.1.[5]

John's Disciples Defend John's Baptism. Augustine: John baptized, Christ baptized. John's disciples were moved; there was a running after Christ, people were coming to John. Those who came to John, he sent to Jesus to be baptized. But those who were baptized by Christ were not sent to John. John's disciples were alarmed and began to dispute with the Jews, as usually happens. The Jews then asserted Christ to be the greater person and his baptism necessary to be received. But John's disciples did not yet understand as much and defended John's baptism. At last they come to John to solve the question. . . .

"And they came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, he that was with you beyond the Jordan, behold, the same baptizes.'" . . . In other words, "What do you say? Shouldn't they be stopped so that the people come to you instead?" Tractates on the Gospel of John 13.8-9.[6]

3:26 *All Are Going to Him*

The One John Baptized, Now Baptizes. Chrysostom: "He whom you baptized, baptizes," John's disciples in effect say, although not in so many words. They add, "To whom you bore witness," as if to say that the one you showed to the world, the one you made famous now dares to do as you do. They did not say "whom you baptized," because they did not want to be reminded of the voice from heaven and of the descent of the Spirit. And so, instead they said, "He who was with you . . . "—that is, the one who held the rank of a disciple and who was nothing more than any of us—he now separates himself from you and baptizes. They thought they would make John jealous, not only by this but by asserting that their own reputation was now diminishing.

[5]NPNF 1 14:100*. [6]NPNF 1 7:89-90**.

"All," they say, "come to him." Homilies on the Gospel of John 29.2.[7]

3:27 *John's Answer*

Christ's Works Testify They Are from Heaven. Chrysostom: When this question is raised, John does not rebuke his disciples for fear they might leave and turn to some other school. Rather, he replies gently, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." Do not be surprised that he seems to speak somewhat humbly of Christ, especially when you consider that it was not appropriate to tell the whole truth to minds prepossessed with such a passion as envy. He only tries at present to alarm them by showing them that they are making war against none other than God himself when they attack Christ. . . . It is as if he said it is no wonder that Christ does such excellent works and that everyone comes to him when you consider that the one who does it all is God. Human efforts are easily seen through, are feeble and short-lived. These actions of Jesus are not like that. They are not therefore of human but of divine origin. Homilies on the Gospel of John 29.2.[8]

John Speaks of Himself. Augustine: John is speaking here about himself. "As a man, I have only received" he said, "what I have from heaven." . . . You also realize the kind of testimony I provided for him. And now I am supposed to say that he was not the one who I said he was? Because I received something from heaven in order to be something, do you want me now to throw out everything I have received by speaking against the truth? Tractates on the Gospel of John 13.9.[9]

What Do You Have That You Did Not Receive? Cyril of Alexandria: He says that there is nothing good in humankind, but everything is a gift of God. It is therefore fitting for the creation to hear, "What do you have that you did not receive?"[10] I think then that we ought to be content with the measures allotted to us and to rejoice in the honors assigned to us from heaven. But, by no means, should we stretch out beyond what has been given us, nor in our desire of things greater, appear to be unthankful or to despise the decree from above and fight against the judgment of the Lord. . . . Whatever God shall deign to honor us with, [let us] value that highly. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.1.[11]

3:28 *You Witness That I Am Not the Christ*

John Testifies to His Own Servant Role. Chrysostom: If then you hold to my testimony—and you even now produce it when you say "to whom you bore witness"—not only is he undiminished by receiving my witness, but he is increased by it. Besides, the testimony was not mine. It was God's. And so, if you think I am trustworthy, I said this among the other things, that "I am sent before him." See how he shows little by little that the voice was divine? For he is saying, in effect, "I am a servant speaking the words of the one who sent me. I did not give the testimony as a gift; I spoke what I was sent to speak. Do not think I am someone great just because of this. In actuality he is the great one. He is the Lord of all." Homilies on the Gospel of John 29.2.[12]

3:29 *The Bridegroom Has the Bride*

Christ Is the Husband of the Church. Ambrose: This means he alone is the husband of the church, he is the expectation of the nations, and the prophets removed their sandals while offering to him a union of nuptial grace. He is the bridegroom; I am the friend of the bridegroom. I rejoice because he is coming, because I hear the nuptial chant, because now we do not hear the harsh penalties for sinners, the harsh torments of

[7]NPNF 1 14:100-101**. [8]NPNF 1 14:101**. [9]NPNF 1 7:90**. [10]1 Cor 4:7. [11]LF 43:180-81**. [12]NPNF 1 14:101**.

the law, but the forgiveness of offenses, the cry of joy, the sound of cheerfulness, the rejoicing of the nuptial feast. On the Patriarchs 4.22.[13]

The Friend of the Bridegroom. Chrysostom: But how does he who said, "whose sandals I am not worthy to unloose," now call himself his "friend"? It is not to exalt himself or to boast that he says this. Rather, it is from [his] desire to show that he too very much looks forward to this (i.e., the exaltation of Christ) and that these things happen not against his will or to his disadvantage. Rather, he desires and is eager for them. It was with a special view to these very things that all his actions had been performed. He has very wisely shown this by the term "friend." For on occasions like marriages, the servants of the bridegroom are not as glad and joyful as his "friends" are. It was not from any desire to prove equality of honor (away with the thought) that he calls himself friend, but only due to his great pleasure and from condescension to their weakness. For he previously declared his service by saying, "I am sent before him." On this account and because they thought that he was troubled at what had taken place, he called himself the "friend of the Bridegroom" to show not only that he was not troubled, but that he was actually quite happy over the whole turn of events. Homilies on the Gospel of John 29.2.[14]

Friends of the Bridegroom Are the Preachers. Bede: The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. By the bride he means the church gathered from among all nations. . . . It is a virgin pure of heart, perfect in love, bound to him in the bond of peace, in chastity of body and soul and in the unity of the Catholic faith. For it is useless for her to be a virgin in body without retaining the purity of the Catholic faith. Our Lord therefore committed his bride to his friends who are the preachers of the true gospel. Therefore, John says, "The friend of the bridegroom who stands and hears him rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." The friend is able to stand and hear him because he remains in the true faith and preaches what he believes. Exposition on the Gospel of John 3.[15]

John Rejoices. Augustine: She is not my spouse, John says. But do you still rejoice in the marriage, John? "Yes, I rejoice," he says, "because I am the friend of the bridegroom." Tractates on the Gospel of John 13.12.[16]

The Fullness of Joy. Chrysostom: But what does it mean: "He who stands and hears him rejoices greatly, because of the bridegroom's voice"? He transfers the expression from the parable to the subject at hand. For after mentioning the bridegroom and the bride, he shows how the bride is brought home, that is, by a "voice" and by teaching. For this is how the church is wedded to God. Therefore Paul also says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."[17] At this "voice," he says, "I rejoice." And he adds "who stand," in order to show that his office had ceased, that he had given over to him "the bride" and must for the future himself stand and hear him. He was a servant and minister, and his hope and joy are now realized. Therefore he says, "This, my joy, therefore, is fulfilled." Homilies on the Gospel of John 29.3.[18]

John, the Bridegroom's Friend, a Model of Humility. Augustine: There were prophets before John, and many of them, and great ones, worthy of God, full of God, who foretold the Savior and bore witness to the truth. Yet for all that, of none of them could it be said, as was said of John, "Among those born of women, none has arisen greater than John the Baptist."[19] So what is the meaning of such greatness, sent before the great One? It is a testimonial to extraordinary humility. After all, he was so great that people could think he was the Christ. John could have

[13]FC 65:254. [14]NPNF 1 14:101*. [15]PL 92:675. [16]NPNF 1 7:91**. [17]Rom 10:17. [18]NPNF 1 14:102. [19]Mt 11:11. [2]

taken advantage of the people's mistake, and he would not have had to work hard to persuade them he was the Christ, because those who heard and saw him had already thought this without his saying it. There was no need for him to sow the seeds of the error; all he would have to do would be to confirm it.

He, however, as the bridegroom's friend, is jealous for the bridegroom. And he does not put himself forward as an adulterer in the bridegroom's place but bears witness to his friend and commends the one who really was the bridegroom to the bride. He wants to be loved in him and hates the idea of being loved instead of him. "The one who has the bride," he says, "is the bridegroom." And if you were to say, "What about you?" he would respond, "But the friend of the bridegroom stands and hears and joyfully rejoices because of the bridegroom's voice." "Stands and hears." The disciple hears the master; because he hears, he stands, because if he does not hear, he falls. It is here that John's greatness is supremely brought to our notice; that when he could be thought to be the Christ, he preferred to bear witness to the Christ, to bring him to our notice. He preferred to humble himself rather than to be taken for the Christ and taken in by himself. Sermon 288.2.[20]

3:30 *He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease*

John Diminishes As Knowledge of Christ Increases. Bede: The crowd believed that [John] was the Christ because of the greatness of his power, while some people supposed that our Lord was not the Christ but a prophet because of the weakness of his flesh. John himself revealed the secret meaning of this difference. . . . Our Lord increased because it became known to believers throughout the entire world that he who was believed to be a prophet was the Christ. John diminished and decreased because it became apparent that he who was judged to be the Christ was not himself the Christ but the herald of the Christ. Homilies on the Gospels 2.20.[21]

God Increases As He Lives in Us. Augustine: "He must increase, but I must decrease." What is this? He must be exalted, but I must be humbled. How is Jesus to increase? How is God to increase? The perfect does not increase. God neither increases nor decreases. For if he increases, he is not perfect; if he decreases, he is not God. And how can Jesus increase, being God?[22] . . . This is a great mystery! Before the Lord Jesus came, people were glorifying themselves; he came as a man to lessen human glory and to increase the glory of God. . . . For this is what the apostle says, this is what holy Scripture says: "He that glories, let him glory in the Lord."[23]

Will you glory in yourself? You will grow; but you will grow worse in your evil. For whoever grows worse is justly decreased. Let God, then, who is ever perfect, grow and grow in you. For the more you understand God and apprehend him, he seems to be growing in you; but in himself he does not grow, being always perfect. . . . Do but examine the nature of humanity: a person is born and grows, he learns the customs of people. What does he know but earth and things of the earth? He speaks the things of people, knows the things of people and minds the things of people. Carnal, he judges carnally, conjectures carnally. Everything is about humanity! Let the grace of God come and enlighten his darkness, as it said, "You will lighten my candle, O Lord; my God, enlighten my darkness";[24] let it take the mind of humanity and turn it toward its own light. Immediately [John] begins to say, as the apostle says, "Yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me,"[25] and "Now I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me."[26] That is to say, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Tractates on the Gospel of John 14.4-6.[27]

[20]*WSA* 3 8:110-11. [21]CS 111:204-5. [22]In the intervening text, Augustine reasons that the increase cannot refer to the human, creaturely growth of the boy Jesus into an adult, since John the Baptist and Jesus were both "already thirty years old" at this meeting, according to Lk 3:23. [23]See 1 Cor 1:31; Jer 9:24. [24]See Ps 18:28 (17:29 lxx, Vg). [25]1 Cor 15:10. [26]See Gal 2:20. [27]NPNF 1 7:95-96**.

3:31 *The One from Above Is Above All*

One from Above Is Naturally Above Everything Else. Cyril of Alexandria: It is no big thing, and not all that wonderful either, if Christ surpasses the glory of human nature. For the boundaries of his glory don't only extend so far—in fact, they extend over all creation just as God is above everything that has been made and in no way numbered among them. He, as the exception to everything, is divinely placed over everything. And then John explains why, which silences anyone who might disagree. "He who comes from above," he says, "is born of the root that is from above, preserving in himself by nature the Father's natural goodness. Such a person will most assuredly possess an existence that surpasses everything. For, it would be impossible for the Son not to appear altogether to be the same kind of being as the one who begot him is conceived of. And this is only right. For how can the Son, who excels because he is of the same nature and is the Brightness and express Image of the Father—how can he be inferior to his [Father] in glory? Or will not the property of the Father be dishonored in the Son, and do we not insult the Image of the Begotten, if we consider him to be inferior? But this I suppose will be clear to everyone. This is why it is also written that everyone should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father.[28] Whoever is glorified with equal honor with God the Father, because he exists from him by nature, has to be conceived of as surpassing the essence of things originate. For this is what "above all" means. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.12.[29]

John Repeats Himself to Subdue His Disciples' Pride. Chrysostom: As the worm gnaws through the wood from which it is born, and rust destroys the iron from which it came, and moths consume fleece, so pride destroys the soul that nourishes it. Therefore we need perseverance to get rid of it. John himself can hardly subdue it in his disciples even with all of his cogent arguments. He has to say again what he has said above, "He that comes from above is above all." . . . He means: you make much of my testimony and say that the witness is more worthy to be believed than Jesus to whom I bear witness. Know this, that it is impossible for the one who comes from heaven to be accredited by an earthly witness. . . . He is above all, being perfect in himself and above comparison. Homilies on the Gospel of John 30.1.[30]

John's Teaching Is Simple Compared with That of Jesus. Chrysostom: "Speaks of the earth" does not mean that John spoke from his own understanding but that, in comparison with Christ's doctrine, he spoke of the earth. It is as if he said, my doctrine is simple and humble when compared with Christ's. While it is appropriate for an earthbound teacher, there is no comparison with the one in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. . . . And yet John was not altogether earthly, for he had a soul and a spirit, and these were not of the earth. What does he mean then by saying that he is "earthly"? He says this only to express his own worthlessness and that he is one born on the earth, creeping on the ground. There is no comparison with Christ, who comes from above. Homilies on the Gospel of John 30.1.[31]

John Speaks of God When He Is Enlightened. Augustine: Then how does he speak of the earth? He said this about human beings. So far as relates to their being human, they are of earth and speak of the earth. And when human beings speak divine things it is because they are enlightened by God. For if they were not enlightened, they would be earth speaking of earth. God's grace is one thing, the nature of human beings is another . . . as the apostle says, "Yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me."[32]. . . Thus

[28]Jn 5:23. [29]LF 43:184**. [30]NPNF 1 14:103**. [31]NPNF 1 14:103**. [32]1 Cor 15:10.

John, as regards John, is of the earth and speaks of the earth. Whatever you have heard from John that is divine comes from him who enlightens, not him who receives. Tractates on the Gospel of John 14.6.[33]

3:32 *Testifying of What He Has Seen and Heard*

Christ Testifies to Things Our Senses Cannot Comprehend. Chrysostom: After this high and solemn mention of Christ, John's tone again lowers. For the expression "what he has heard and seen" is suited more for a mere man. What he knew, he knew not because he learned by sight or hearing but because everything is already in his nature, having come forth perfect from the bosom of his Father and needing no one to teach him. . . . As our senses are our surest channels of knowledge and teachers are most dependent on those who have apprehended by sight or hearing what they teach, John adds this argument in favor of Christ, that which he has seen and heard—meaning that everything that Jesus said is true, none of it is false. Homilies on the Gospel of John 30.1.[34]

3:33 *God Is True*

The Believers' Assent Witnesses that God Is True. Cyril of Alexandria: There was no other possible way of showing the impiety of those who do not believe except by making known the glorious achievement of the believers. Evil is a lot easier to see when it is contrasted with good. When you know there is something better out there, it only puts what is worse in starker contrast. If anyone then, John says, has assented to the words of the one who comes from above, he has sealed and confirmed by his understanding that truth is ever near and dear to the divine nature. The opposite is just as obvious because anyone who throws away the faith will most certainly testify, against himself, that God is not true. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.3.[35]

3:34 *Uttering the Words of God*

God Spoke the Word. Augustine: What has the Son heard from the Father? Could it be that the Son has heard the Word of the Father? No, the Son is the Word of the Father. . . . When you conceive a word to speak it, you intend to speak something, and the very conception of that something is already a word in your heart waiting to be expressed. [As, in fact, you have in your heart the word that you speak], so God gave out his Word, that is, he begat the Son. You beget the Word in your heart according to time. God begat outside of time the Son by whom he created all times. While, therefore, the Son is the Word of God and the Son did not speak his own word to us but the word of the Father, he still also wanted to speak himself to us as well when he was speaking the word of the Father. This is what John said, as was appropriate and necessary. Tractates on the Gospel of John 14.7.[36]

Christ Has the Spirit Without Measure. Ammonius: As the fount of the Spirit, [Christ] imparts him. He is speaking of the working of the Spirit, which people receive in some measure. For the Son himself has the full working of the Spirit in its entirety. Truly, the Son has the entire Spirit in essence and not in some measure, as a created being might have. Therefore, he himself imparts the Spirit, and by their petitions the saints make Christ supply the Spirit. Fragments on John 105.[37]

The Spirit Is of Infinite Measure in Christ. Chrysostom: But why does he say, "God gives not the Spirit by measure"? He wants to demonstrate that we all have received the operation of the Spirit by measure (for in this place, by "Spirit" he means the operation of the Spirit, for this is what is divided). And yet, Christ has all its operation without measure and complete. Now if

[33]NPNF 1 7:96*. [34]NPNF 1 14:103-4**. [35]LF 43:191. [36]NPNF 1 7:96*. [37]*JKGK* 224.

his operations are without measure, his essence is even more so. Do you not see that the Spirit is infinite? How then can he who has received all the operation of the Spirit, who knows the things of God, who says, "We speak what we have heard, and testify what we have seen"[38]—how can anyone suspect anything he says? He says nothing that is not "of God" or that is not of "the Spirit." And, for a while, he utters nothing concerning God the Word but makes all his doctrine credible by reference to the Father and the Spirit. Homilies on the Gospel of John 30.2.[39]

The Spirit Measured Out in Us. Augustine: What does this mean when he says, "For not by measure does God give the Spirit"? We find that God does give the Spirit by measure. Listen to the apostle when he says, "According to the measure of the gift of Christ." [40] To people he gives by measure; to the only Son he does not give by measure. How does he give to people by measure? "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit."[41] . . . This person has one gift, that person another; and what that person has, this one does not: there is a measure, a certain division of gifts. . . . But Christ, who gives, receives not by measure. Tractates on the Gospel of John 14.10.[42]

3:35 *The Loving Father Gives His Son Everything*

The Father's Love for His Son Is Unique. Augustine: He added "has given all things into his hands" so that you might know also here with what distinction it is said, "The Father loves the Son." And why? Doesn't the Father love John? And yet he has not given all things into his hand. Doesn't the Father love Paul? And yet he has not given all things into his hand. "The Father loves the Son," but as a father loves, not as master loves a servant. He loves him as the only Son, not as an adopted son, and so he "has given all things into his hand." What does "all things" mean? That the Son should be such as the Father is. He begot him to equality with himself—he in whom it was no robbery to be in the form of God and equal to God.[43] "The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand." Therefore, having deigned to send us the Son, let us not imagine that it is something less than the Father that is sent to us. The Father, in sending the Son, sent his other self. Tractates on the Gospel of John 14.11.[44]

The Son Has Eternally What the Father Has Eternally. Athanasius: This passage does not demonstrate that the Son, at one time, did not have these prerogatives [that were given him by the Father]. For he who is the only Word and Wisdom of the Father in essence has eternally what the Father has. For doesn't Christ elsewhere say, "All that the Father has are mine,"[45] and whatever things are mine are the Father's? For if the things of the Father are the Son's and the Father always has them, it is plain that what the Son has, being the Father's, were always in the Son. This is not because there was a time when he did not have them, but because, even though the Son has eternally what he has, he still has them from the Father. Discourses Against the Arians 3.27.35.[46]

The Son, as Man, Receives All Things at Second Coming. Ammonius: The Father loves the world too, but not in the same way as he loves the Son, whom he loves exceedingly because of his incarnation as his own Word and Wisdom and Holiness. [His giving all things over to his Son] will be fulfilled at the time of his second coming when "every knee will bow to him," as everyone rejects the evil to which they are now clinging. Here he calls his power his "hand." The Son has this power by nature and not just to a certain degree. That is because every good thing really belongs to the Father and the Son is perceived to

[38]Jn 3:11. [39]NPNF 1 14:104-5**. [40]Eph 4:7. [41]1 Cor 12:8. [42]NPNF 1 7:98**. [43]See Phil 2:6. [44]NPNF 1 7:98*. [45]Jn 16:15; 17:10. [46]NPNF 2 4:413**.

have this full power. And he will also receive as a man the authority which he had also had before his incarnation. Fragments on John 105.[47]

3:36 *Eternal Life or No Life at All*

Faith Without Works Is Dead. Chrysostom: See how he refers to the Father again when he speaks of punishment. He did not say, "the wrath of the Son," although the Son is the judge. Rather, he makes the Father the judge in order to alarm them more. He does not mean here that to believe on the Son says everything that needs to be said concerning gaining everlasting life, for elsewhere he says, "Not every one that says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."[48] And the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is of itself sufficient to send someone into hell. . . . But we must not think that even a right belief in Father, Son and Holy Spirit is all there is to salvation . . . for our [faith] also has need of a good life and conversation. Knowing then that the greater part are not moved so much by the promise of good, as by the threat of punishment, he concludes, "But he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him." . . . And he does not say "in him" but "on him," meaning that the wrath will never depart from him. And for the same reason he says, "shall not see life," that is, to show that he did not mean only a temporal death! Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.1.[49]

Belief Makes God's Wrath Cease. Ambrose: The wrath that remains on him certainly had its beginning from some offence, in other words, first of all, that he did not believe. When, then, anyone believes, the wrath of God departs and life arrives. To believe, then, in Christ is to gain life, for "He who believes in him is not judged."[50] Concerning Repentance 1.12.53.[51]

The Wrath of God *Remains* on Him. Augustine: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life." Why? Because he has done the work of God, seeing that this is the work of God that you should believe in the one whom he has sent. "But whoever does not believe in the Son will not have life, but the wrath of God remains on him";[52] not "will come upon him" but "remains on him." He is abandoned, not healed. Sermon 130a.7.[53]

Unbelievers Resurrected but Not Living. Cyril of Alexandria: He says that the believer shall have everlasting life, but the word has a different significance for the unbeliever. For he does not say that [the unbeliever] shall not have life since he too shall be raised by the common law of the resurrection. But he says that he shall not see life, that is, he shall not even so much as glimpse the life of the saints, he shall not touch their blessedness, and he shall not taste of their life spent in bliss. For that is indeed life. But to exist in punishment is far more bitter than any death, holding the soul in the body only for the sensation of suffering. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.[54]

---

[47]*JKGK* 224. [48]Mt 7:21. [49]NPNF 1 14:106**. [50]Jn 3:18. [51]SC 179:98; NPNF 2 10:338*. [52]Jn 3:36. [53]*WSA* 3 11:123. [54]LF 43:199*.

Jesus Comes to the Well at Samaria John 4:1-6

Overview: Jesus avoids Judea because of the malice of the Pharisees toward him (Chrysostom), teaching us it is not necessarily a sin to flee from persecution. He was still baptizing through his disciples even though he himself was not doing the washing. From this, we can ascertain that it is not the character of the minister that makes baptism certain, but Christ. His disciples had either already been baptized by John or may even have been baptized by the one who later washed their feet. At this point in John's narrative, Jesus leaves Judea to return to Galilee, introducing another seeming discrepancy that can be reconciled with the other three Gospels, however, if we allow that they introduced an account of another journey of Jesus into Galilee that occurred after John's imprisonment (Augustine).

Jesus sets an example for the apostles' missionary activity by journeying into the Gentile region of Samaria (Chrysostom). John notes that Jesus was only passing through in case Jesus might otherwise give an occasion for the Jews to complain about his associating with Samaritans (Theodore). Samaria was a region created by the Assyrians after they had captured Israel and transplanted foreigners among the Israelites (Chrysostom). Jacob's well was at Sychar, and Jesus' presence there demonstrates his respect for the patriarchs. As their legitimate heir (Caesarius), he does not sever his connection with them even as he also reaches out to the Gentiles (Cyril of Alexandria). Jesus refreshes those who are weary through his experience of weariness from his journey (Ambrose). Indeed, his weariness and thirst at the well make clear that he shared our same human experiences (Hilary, Theodoret). But he was also wearied that he could find no faithful people—something that still wearies him today (Caesarius). He was the Spring who had come to the spring not to drink but to cleanse (Romanus). He came to the well as though coming to the depth of our human experience, and having been humbled in weakness, he sat down (Augustine).

4:1 *The Pharisees Had Heard of Jesus' Works*

Christ Wanted to Soften Their Malice. Chrysostom: [Christ acted] not from fear but to take away their malice and soften their envy. He was indeed able to restrain them when they came against him, but he did not want to be found doing this all the time. Otherwise people might not believe his incarnation in the flesh was real. For if he was always being seized, only to then escape, this would have raised a lot of suspicion. Therefore, for the most part, he did things in a human way instead. Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.1.[1]

It Is No Sin to Flee from Persecutors. Augustine: Certainly, if the Pharisees' knowledge that our Lord was making more disciples and baptizing more than John had been such as to lead them wholeheartedly to follow him and

[1]NPNF 1 14:107**.

desire baptism by him, he would not have left Judea; rather, he would have remained for their sake. But seeing, as he did that this knowledge about him was coupled with envy, making them persecutors instead of followers, he left. He also could have stayed among them, if he had wanted to, and escaped their hands. . . . But he wanted to provide himself as an example for believers in time to come, that it was no sin for a servant of God to seek refuge from the fury of persecutors. . . . He did it like a good teacher, not out of fear for himself but for our instruction. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.2.[2]

The Lesser Cleanses Through the Greater. Augustine: It may perhaps surprise you that it is said, "Jesus baptized more than John," and after this was added, "although Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples did." What then? Was the statement made false, and then corrected by this addition?[3] . . . Or are both true, that is, that Jesus both did and also did not baptize? He did in fact baptize, because it was he who cleansed. And he also did not baptize, because it was not he who touched. The disciples supplied the ministry of the body; he afforded the aid of his majesty. Now, when could he cease from baptizing, so long as he did not cease from cleansing? In fact, John the Baptist said about him, "This is he that baptizes." Jesus, therefore, is still baptizing. And so long as we continue to be baptized, Jesus baptizes. Let a person come without fear to the minister below, for he has a master above. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.3.[4]

4:2 *Jesus' Disciples Baptized*

The Disciples Baptize Through the Authority of Christ. Augustine: You are not better than John, but the baptism given through you is better than that of John, seeing that the one is Christ's but the other is that of John. And that which was given by Paul and that which was given by Peter is Christ's. And if baptism was given by Judas, it was Christ's too. Judas baptized, and after Judas baptism was not repeated. John baptized, and baptism was repeated after John. Because, if Judas baptized, it was the baptism of Christ. But when John baptized, it was only John's baptism. We do not prefer Judas to John. But the baptism of Christ, even when given by the hand of Judas, is preferred over the baptism of John, even though John rightly administered it. For it was said of the Lord, before he suffered, that he baptized more than John. Then it was added: "Although Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples." He, and not he: he by power, they by ministry. They performed the service of baptizing. The power of baptizing remained in Christ. His disciples, then, baptized, and Judas was still among his disciples. And were those, then, whom Judas baptized not baptized again and those whom John baptized were baptized again? Plainly there was a repetition, but not a repetition of the same baptism. For those whom John baptized, John baptized; those whom Judas baptized, Christ baptized. In a similar way, then, those whom a drunk baptized, those whom a murderer baptized, those whom an adulterer baptized, if it was the baptism of Christ, they were baptized by Christ. I do not fear the adulterer, the drunk or the murderer because I pay attention to the dove through whom it is said to me, "This is he who baptizes." Tractates on the Gospel of John 5.18.[5]

The Disciples Were Already Baptized. Augustine: But we must believe that the disciples of Christ were already baptized themselves, either with John's baptism or, as is more probable, with Christ's. For he who had stooped to the humble service of washing his disciples' feet had not failed to administer baptism to his servants, who would thus be enabled in their turn to baptize others. Letter 265.5.[6]

[2]NPNF 1 7:99-100**. [3]Theodore would answer yes. See his *Commentary on John* 2.4.1-3. [4]NPNF 1 7:100*. [5]NPNF 1 7:38*. [6]CSEL 57:642.

4:3 *Leaving Judea*

Of the Date of Jesus' Departure into Galilee. Augustine: The three Evangelists have not made any statement opposed to the Evangelist John but only left unrecorded the Lord's first advent in Galilee after his baptism. On this occasion he turned the water into wine there. For at that period John had not yet been cast into prison. And we are also to understand that these three Evangelists have introduced into the context of these narratives an account of another journey of his into Galilee that took place after John's imprisonment, regarding which return into Galilee the Evangelist John himself furnishes the following notice: "When, therefore, Jesus knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus makes and baptizes more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judea and departed again into Galilee." So, then, we perceive that by this time John had been already cast into prison, and further, that the Jews had heard that he was making and baptizing more disciples than John had made and baptized. Harmony of the Gospels 2.18.42.[7]

4:4 *Passing Through Samaria*

Samaritans Were Gentiles Who Replaced Exiled Israelites. Chrysostom: Jesus only takes up Samaria along the way, as the evangelist implies by saying, "He had to pass through Samaria." As the apostles, when expelled by the Jews went to the Gentiles, so Christ, when the Jews drove him out, goes to the Samaritans . . . . He did this in order to deprive the Jews of any excuse and so that they might not be able to say, "He left us and went to the uncircumcised." Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.2.[8]

The Samaritans Are Ready to Receive Christ's Teaching. Theodore of Mopsuestia: This necessity to go [through Samaria] gave the opportunity and the beginning to his narrative. John did not report this fact in vain. He does not say "as he went to Judea" or "as he returned to Galilee from Judea," so he also came to the Samaritans. Because of the Samaritans' separation from the Jews he certainly avoided giving an occasion for the Jews' just complaint. And so, he did all this as though he were passing through, so that those who were worthy among the Jews might not be deprived of his benefit. He acted for their benefit so that it might be thought that he did what he did there by happenstance. In this way also he appeared to extend good will to the Samaritans, for whom a mere passing through [of the Lord] was sufficient to recognize the truth, while for the Jews not even his long stay among them brought about any results. Commentary on John 2.4.4.[9]

4:5 *Sychar, a City of Samaria*

Significance of Sychar and Samaria. Chrysostom: Why is the Evangelist so exact about this place? It is so that when you hear the woman say, "Jacob our father gave us this well," you will not think it strange. For Sychar was the place where Simeon and Levi brought about a great slaughter because of their anger over what happened to Dinah. . . . And from where did the Samaritans get their name? Samaria receives its name from Somer, a mountain there, so called from the name of a former possessor of it.[10] . . . The inhabitants of the country were formerly not Samaritans but Israelites. But in due time, they fell under God's wrath and the [king of Assyria] . . . transplanted them to Babylon and Media, placing Gentiles from various parts in Samaria in their place. . . . God, however, sent lions to afflict the barbarians in order to show that it was not for lack of power on his part that he delivered up the Jews, but rather for the sins of the people themselves. The king was told this, and he sent a priest to instruct them in God's law. But not even

[7]NPNF 1 6:123-24**. [8]NPNF 1 14:107**. [9]CSCO 4 3:85-86. [10]1 Kings 16:24; Is 7:9 LXX.

then did they entirely discontinue their iniquity but only effected a half-hearted change. In due time, they abandoned their idols and worshiped God. At this point, the Jews returned but were always jealous toward them as strangers and enemies, naming them "Samaritans" after the mountain. Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.2.[11]

4:6a *Jacob's Well*

The Legitimate Heir of the Patriarch Comes to the Well. Caesarius of Arles: Our Lord Jesus Christ came to the field that holy Jacob had left to his son, Joseph. I do not think that this field was left to Joseph as much as to Christ, whom holy Joseph the patriarch prefigured, for truly the sun and moon adore him, while all the stars bless him. For this reason the Lord came to this field in order that the Samaritans, who were longing to claim for themselves the inheritance of the patriarch of Israel, might recognize their owner and be converted to Christ who became the legitimate heir of the patriarch. Sermon 170.1.[12]

Ministry to the Gentiles and Salvation of the Patriarchs. Cyril of Alexandria: Having crossed the borders of Judea and being now among strangers, the Savior rests at Jacob's well. He shows us again as in a type and darkly that the preaching of the gospel should depart from Jerusalem and the divine word in time would extend to the Gentiles. However, this does not signify that the patriarchs are to be any less revered. Christ shall embrace them again and shall again be refreshed and rest, as in his saints, preserving to them the pristine unfading grace. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.[13]

4:6b *Jesus Is Tired*

Divine Majesty in the Feelings of Our Human Nature. Ambrose: Many things we read and believe, in the light of the sacrament of the incarnation. Even in the very affections of our human nature we behold the divine majesty. Jesus is wearied with his journey, that he may refresh the weary. He desires to drink when about to give spiritual drink to the thirsty; he was hungry, when about to supply the food of salvation to the hungry. On the Christian Faith 5.4.53.[14]

Rivers of Living Water. Hilary of Poitiers: If we do not understand the mystery of his tears, hunger and thirst, let us remember that . . . he who thirsted gave from himself rivers of living water. . . . When he ate and drank, it was a concession not to his own necessities but to our habits. On the Trinity 10.24.[15]

Weariness of the Journey. Theodoret of Cyr: The prophet Isaiah has said about the divine nature, "He will not be hungry, nor will he grow weary,"[16] and so on, and the Evangelist says, "Jesus grew weary from the journey and therefore sat down by the well." Now the phrase "he will not grow weary"[17] is the opposite of growing weary. The prophecy therefore [appears to] contradict the account of the Gospels. But they are not really contradictory since they both come from one God. Not growing weary pertains, therefore, to the infinite nature, because it fills all things. But movement is proper to the body that is finite. And when that which moves is forced to walk, it becomes subject to the weariness of the journey. It was the body, therefore, that walked and grew weary. For the union did not mix the natures together. Dialogues, Epilogue 1.7.[18]

Christ Wearied When He Cannot Find Faithfulness. Caesarius of Arles: Could the power of God be exhausted? Certainly not. But he was wearied because he could not find the people faithful. Christ was wearied, then, because he recognized no virtue in his people. Today, too, our disobedience wearies him, as does also our weakness. For we are weak when we do not pur-

[11]NPNF 1 14:107-8**. [12]FC 47:419-20. [13]LF 43:203**. [14]NPNF 2 10:291*. [15]NPNF 2 9:188. [16]Is 40:28. [17]Is 40:28. [18]FC 106:258-59.

sue the things that are strong and enduring but follow what is temporal and fleeting. Sermon 170.2.[19]

4:6c *The Sixth Hour*

The Spring Comes to the Spring in the Heat of the Day. Romanus Melodus:

Christ, . . . the source of the breath of life for all, when He was
Weary from a journey, sat down near a spring of Samaria.
And it was the season of burning heat. It was the sixth hour, as the Scripture says,
It was the middle of the day when the Messiah came to illumine those in darkness.
The Spring came upon the spring, not to drink but to cleanse.
The fountain of immortality was near the stream of the wretched woman as though it were in need.
He is tired from walking, He who tirelessly walked on the sea,[20]
He who furnishes
Exceeding great joy and redemption.

Kontakion on the Woman of Samaria 9.4.[21]

Entering the Depths. Augustine: He came wearied, because he carried weak flesh. At the sixth hour, because he was in the sixth age of the world. To a well, because he came to the depth of this our habitation. For this reason it is said in the psalm, "From the depth have I cried to you, O Lord."[22] He sat, as I said, because he was humbled. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.9.[23]

[19]FC 47:420. [20]Mt 14:25, Mk 6:48; Jn 6:19. [21]*KRBM* 1:88-89. [22]Ps 130:1 (129:1 LXX, Vg). [23]NPNF 1 7:101.

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN ARRIVES JOHN 4:7-15

Overview: The Samaritan woman who appears to Jesus at the well mystically signifies the church of the Gentiles, which approached him. He asks for a drink because he thirsts for her faith (Au-

gustine) and for the salvation of the whole world (Maximus of Turin). Like a hunter, he had sent his disciples away, lest they scare the woman and thus ruin his chance to capture the entire flock (Ephrem). When he makes a request of this woman for a drink of water, she demonstrates a concern for law and custom in her initial refusal (Theodore, Chrysostom). The Samaritan woman is surprised that a Jew would ask a Samaritan for anything since, while Samaritans can interact with Jews, Jews did not interact with Samaritans (Augustine). Jesus, however, speaks with her even though she is a Samaritan because the old law no longer applies (Chrysostom). He both thirsts and seeks to satisfy thirst with the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is the water he speaks of here and in John 7:37 as a gift of God (Augustine). Zechariah prophesied that living water of the gospel would come forth from Jerusalem. Jesus is now the fulfillment of that prophecy to the Gentiles of Samaria (Eusebius). Living water is not stagnant (Augustine). It gushes out as the Spirit of Christ for our eternal life and others (Heracleon) as it waters our parched human nature (Cyril of Alexandria). Not everyone knows the gift of this living water found in baptism; otherwise they would not delay receiving it (Caesarius).

The woman continues her conversation with Jesus by addressing him reverentially as Lord (Chrysostom), but she still does not understand the implications of the living water of which he speaks (Theodore). She speaks of the deep well that needs a bucket to draw out the water, but our Lord knows that he has no need of a bucket when he has that refreshing water in him already that he seeks to pour into our minds (Caesarius). All do not draw from Jacob's well, that is, the Scriptures, in the same way; some drink deeply, others drink more like Jacob's livestock (Origen). "Those who drink deeply" from this well clearly receive the grace of the Spirit, who is the fountain of eternal life (Ambrose).

In her questioning, the woman claims Jacob as part of her ancestry, citing two reasons: Samaritans were close to Israel in geography and in worship and ancestry, and Jeroboam, a descendant of Jacob, had settled the land at the time of Rehoboam (Cyril of Alexandria). Jesus' answer, while not stated directly, implies he is much greater than Jacob. The woman, nevertheless, holds onto the superiority of this well for a time and the water that comes from it (Chrysostom). Jesus knows of water that not only satisfies thirst, however, but that is also a source of perpetual refreshment (Theodore). This "water" can be compared with an idea that one has: the idea first appears to satisfy, although on reflection it only raises more questions, but when one receives the water Christ has to give, a fountain capable of discovering everything there gushes forth inside him (Origen). The living water of Christ satisfies our spiritual thirst as the pleasures of this world never will (Augustine). The water Jesus speaks of here is the Spirit, which gushes forth from within (Apollinaris), making the willing soul like a plush garden and quenching the fiery darts of the wicked one (Chrysostom) as well as the fires of Gehenna through baptism (Maximus of Turin). One who has the grace of the Spirit welling up within him will never be thirsty (Cyril of Alexandria).

The Samaritan woman is more receptive to Jesus' words than was Nicodemus. Not only is she receptive, but she even begins to honor Jesus more than the patriarchs she had previously named (Chrysostom). Jesus was inviting her to stop working so hard and instead receive refreshment from him (Augustine).

4:7 *A Woman of Samaria*

The Woman Is the Church. Augustine: It is pertinent to the image of the reality that this woman, who bore the type of the church, comes from strangers, for the church was to come from the Gentiles, an alien from the race of the Jews. In that woman, then, let us hear ourselves, and in

her acknowledge ourselves and in her give thanks to God for ourselves. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.10.[1]

Jesus' Thirst for the Woman's Faith. Augustine: His "drink" was to do the will of him that sent him. That was why he said, "I thirst; give me to drink," namely, to work faith in her and to drink of her faith and transplant her into his own body, for his body is the church. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.31.[2]

Jesus Thirsts for Her and the World's Salvation. Maximus of Turin: The Savior asks for water from the woman, then, and feigns thirst so that he might give eternal grace to the thirsty. For the source was not able to be thirsty,[3] nor was he in whom there is living water able to draw water full of earthly sediment. Did Christ thirst, then? He thirsted, to be sure, but for salvation and not [merely] for human drink. He was thirsty not for the water of this world but for the redemption of the human race.[4] In a wonderful way, therefore, the source sitting by the well produces streams of mercy in that very place, and with flowing, living water he purifies the woman who is fornicating with a sixth man, not her husband but an adulterer. And in a new kind of miracle the woman who had come to the well of Samaria as a prostitute returned chaste from the source of Christ. She who had come to look for water brought back chastity. As soon as the Lord points her sins out to her she acknowledges them, confesses Christ and announces the Savior. Abandoning her pitcher she brings not water but grace back to the city. She seems, indeed, to return without a burden, but she returns full of holiness. She returns full, I say, because she who had come as a sinner goes back as a proclaimer, and she who had left her pitcher behind brought back the fullness of Christ, without the slightest loss to her city. For even if she did not bring water to the townspeople, still she brought in the source of salvation. Sanctified, then, by faith in Christ, the woman goes back home. Sermon 22.2.[5]

4:8 *The Disciples Had Gone Away*

Like a Hunter, Jesus Comes to the Watering Hole. Ephrem the Syrian: Our Lord came to the spring of water like a hunter. He asked for water in order to give water, with water as a pretext. He sought something to drink, like a thirsty person, so that the way could be opened for him to quench thirst. He asked from her in order to teach her, and she in turn would ask from him. He was not ashamed as a rich person to ask like one in need, to teach poverty how to make a petition. He was not afraid of reproach because he was speaking to a woman by herself, in order to teach me that whoever keeps to the truth will not be shaken. "They were indeed amazed that he was standing and talking with a woman." He had dismissed his disciples from his presence so that they would not chase his prey away. He had cast bait for the dove so that by means of her he might capture the entire flock. He asked her in a way that was opposite to the real situation, so that she could answer honestly. "Give me water to drink." Here was the beginning of the meeting. He asked for water, and he made a promise about living water. He made a request, and he ceased from his request, even as she also left her pitcher. He ceased pretexts because she came to the truth, for the sake of which the pretexts [had arisen]. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 12.16.[6]

4:9 *How Is It That a Jew Asks a Drink of a Samaritan?*

The Virtue of the Samaritan Woman. Theodore of Mopsuestia: It is evident that the blessed John wanted to reveal the virtue of the

[1]NPNF 1 7:101-2*. [2]NPNF 1 7:107*. [3]The reference to Christ's having feigned (*simulat*) his thirst and having been unable to drink is undoubtedly to be taken in a rhetorical way, contra Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* 6.9.71. See also Maximus's *Sermon* 51.1 and contrast this with Ambrose *De Fide* 5.4.53 and Augustine's *Sermon* 78.6, where "the source descended so that he might thirst." See also comments on Jn 4:6. [4]See *Sermon* 2.2 and 66.4. [5]ACW 50:54-55. [6]CB709:88-90.

woman through this story. This request for water was not to be taken lightly. She instead first brings up the rules of the law. With great honesty she did not tolerate this infringement of the law even with strangers, even though it could have happened easily and almost necessarily [because of the thirst needing to be quenched]. Therefore, in order that it might not appear that the woman did not want to give water to the foreigner out of meanness or hostility, the Evangelist added these words: "Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans," so that we might know that she refused to give him water not as to someone who was a stranger to her religion but because she wanted to warn him not to transgress the rules of the law by being led by his thirst. At this stage our Lord took this answer of the woman as the right opportunity for his teaching. Commentary on John 2.4.9.[7]

Samaritans Can Have Dealings with Jews, Not Vice Versa. Chrysostom: After the Jews returned from their captivity, they were jealous of the Samaritans whom they regarded as outsiders and enemies. . . . The Samaritans did not use all the Scriptures, but only the writings of Moses, and made little use of the prophets. They were eager to claim their Jewish origin and prided themselves on Abraham, whom they called their forefather since he was from Chaldea, and also Jacob since they were his descendants. But the Jews considered them Gentiles and thought they were as much an abomination as the rest of the Gentile world. . . . And so the woman, on being told, "Give me a drink," very naturally asks, "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" . . . She knew he was a Jew from his appearance and speech. Observe how considerate she is here. For even if our Lord had been bound to abstain from dealing with her, that was his concern, not hers. The Evangelist does not say that the Samaritans would have no dealings with the Jews but that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. The woman, however, though not at fault herself, wished to correct what she thought was done unlawfully. Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.2, 4.[8]

Jews Would Not Even Use Their Vessels. Augustine: The Jews would not even use [the Samaritans'] vessels. And as the woman brought with her a vessel to draw the water, it made her wonder that a Jew sought a drink from her—something Jews were not accustomed to do. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.11.[9]

Christ Abolishes the Ceremonial Law for the Future. Chrysostom: But why did Christ ask for a drink when the law did not permit it? It is no answer to say that he knew ahead of time that she would not give it, for in that case, he clearly should not have asked for it. Rather, his very reason for asking was to show his indifference to such observances since, if he was going to induce others to abolish them, then it was even more important for him to pass them by. Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.4.[10]

4:10a *The Gift of God*

Thirst Satisfied by the Holy Spirit. Augustine: He asks for a drink and promises to give a drink. He longs as one about to receive; he abounds as one about to satisfy. "If you knew," he says, "the gift of God." The gift of God is the Holy Spirit. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.12.[11]

Water and Spirit As Gift of God. Augustine: Is it shown in the sacred books that the Holy Spirit is called the "gift of God"? If people look for this too, we have in the Gospel according to John the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says, "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink: he that believes on me, as the Scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living

[7]CSCO 4 3:87. [8]NPNF 1 14:108-9**. [9]NPNF 1 7:102*. [10]NPNF 1 14:109**. [11]NPNF 1 7:102*.

water." And the Evangelist has gone on further to add, "And this he spoke of the Spirit, which they should receive who believe in him."[12] And hence Paul the apostle also says, "And we have all been made to drink into one Spirit."[13] The question then is whether that water is called the gift of God, which is the Holy Spirit. But as we find here that this water is the Holy Spirit, so we find elsewhere in the Gospel itself that this water is called the gift of God. For when the same Lord was talking with the woman of Samaria at the well, to whom he had said, "Give me to drink," and she had answered that the Jews "have no dealings" with the Samaritans, Jesus answered and said to her, "If you had known the gift of God and who it is that says to you, 'Give me to drink,' you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water." . . . Because this living water, then, as the Evangelist has explained to us, is the Holy Spirit, without doubt the Spirit is the gift of God, of which the Lord says here, "If you had known the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, 'Give me to drink,' you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water." For that which is in the one passage, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," is in the other, "shall be in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life." On the Trinity 15.19.33.[14]

The Drink Given Is the Gospel. Eusebius of Caesarea: And in that day it says, "Living water shall come forth out of Jerusalem."[15] This is that spiritual, sweet, life-giving and saving drink of the teaching of Christ. He speaks of it in the Gospel according to John, when instructing the Samaritan woman. . . . What was this drink, then, that came forth from Jerusalem? For it was there that its gospel went forth and its heralds filled the world. This is what is meant by the words "The living water shall go forth to the first sea and the last sea,"[16] by which is meant the bounds of the whole world. That which is toward the eastern ocean is called "the first sea," that toward the west is meant by "the last sea," which, indeed, the living water of the saving gospel teaching has filled.[17] He also taught about this when he said, "Whosoever shall drink of the water, which I shall give him, shall never thirst." Proof of the Gospel 6.18.48-49.[18]

Living Water Flows from Jerusalem. Eusebius of Caesarea: And in them too the rest of the prophecy was fulfilled, when on the day of our Savior's coming living water came forth from Jerusalem.[19] The fruitful living word of Jerusalem, yes, from Jerusalem itself, and was spread over all the earth, even to the utmost bounds of the world. The Lord and Savior himself speaks of this water to the Samaritan woman. . . . And he goes on to teach what advantage would accrue to everyone who tastes of the living spiritual spring. Those that drink of it, denying the many evil demons who ruled them of old, will confess their one Lord and King, and that the Lord, who once was known only to the Hebrews, will become King of all nations that believe in him from all the earth, and that his name will be one, encircling all the earth and the wilderness. And who is not struck at seeing this fulfilled? For the Christian name, derived from the name of Christ (and Christ was indeed the Lord) has encircled every place and city and land and the very nations that dwell in the wilderness and at the ends of the earth, as the prophecy foretold. Proof of the Gospel 10.7.7-8.[20]

4:10b *Living Water*

Living Water Is Not Stagnant. Augustine: Water issuing from a spring is what is commonly called living water. Water collected from rain in pools and cisterns is not called living water. It may have originally flowed from a spring; yet if it collects in some place and is left to

[12]Jn 7:37-39. [13]1 Cor 12:13. [14]NPNF 1 3:217-18*. [15]Zech 14:8. [16]Zech 14:8. [17]Zechariah would have been referring to the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea. It is a question as to whether Eusebius means anything more than to the uttermost ends of the earth. [18]*POG* 2:35. [19]See Zech 14:8. [20]*POG* 2:215.

stand without any connection to its source, separated, as it were, from the channel of the spring. It is not called "living water." Water is designated as "living" when it is taken as it flows. This is the kind of water that was in that fountain. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.12.[21]

The Living Water Is Christ's Spirit and Power. Heracleon (via Origen): [Heracleon] is not wrong when he says that "the water that the Savior gives is of his spirit and power." And he has explained the statement "But he shall not thirst forever" as follows with these very words: "For the life he gives is eternal and never perishes, as, indeed, does the first life that comes from the well; the life he gives remains. For the grace and the gift of our Savior is not to be taken away, nor is it consumed, nor does it perish, when one partakes of it." . . . Now [Heracleon's] interpretation of the "leaping water" is not unconvincing. He takes it to refer "to those who partake of that which is richly supplied to them from above and who themselves cause what is supplied to them to gush out for the eternal life of others." But he also praises the Samaritan woman "because she demonstrated a faith that was unhesitating and appropriate to her nature, when she had no doubt about what he said to her." Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.59-60, 62-63.[22]

Human Nature Buds into a Virtuous Life. Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus calls the quickening gift of the Spirit "living water" because mere human nature is parched to its very roots, now rendered dry and barren of all virtue by the crimes of the devil. But now human nature runs back to its pristine beauty, and drinking in that which is life-giving, it is made beautiful with a variety of good things and, budding into a virtuous life, it sends out healthy shoots of love toward God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.[23]

Ignorance of the Gift Is the Cause for Delay of Baptism. Caesarius of Arles: Not everyone knows the gift of God, because not all desire the living water, for if they did desire it they would never postpone the sacrament of baptism. . . . Do not delay the remedies of your salvation because you do not know when your soul may be demanded of you. Sermon 170.4.[24]

4:11 *The Well Is Deep*

Title of "Lord" Implies Reverence. Chrysostom: Already, our Lord raises the woman's low opinion of him, making her realize that he was no common person. She addresses him reverentially by the title of "Lord." Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.4.[25]

The Woman Does Not Understand. Theodore of Mopsuestia: However, since the woman did not yet understand these words and did not know what "living water" was, she said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" The tone of her conversation changed. Above she had said daringly, "How is it that you, a Jew"; now she conveniently set the appellation "sir" before her words. Before she talked to him, suspecting that he would have transgressed the law because of his strong thirst. Then, when she understood from his answer and his peaceful words that he had not asked for water because he was oppressed by thirst, she attributed the right honor to his words. "From where do you give me, [she says], that living water? You have no bucket, and the well is deep." Commentary on John 2.4.11.[26]

Refreshing Water Drawn into Our Minds. Caesarius of Arles: Before the coming of the Lord, the well was also deep, and without a pail no one could draw water for himself. Our Lord, the living fountain, came to cleanse the hearts of all people, to quench their thirst and

[21]NPNF 1 7:102**. [22]FC 89:81-82; TS 1 4:72-73. [23]LF 43:207**. [24]FC 47:421. [25]NPNF 1 14:110*. [26]CSCO 4 3:88.

to satisfy their souls. Moreover, he did not look for a pail to draw the water, but of his own accord he poured himself into the minds of each one. Sermon 170.4.[27]

Drinking from Jacob's Well. Origen: The Scriptures, therefore, are introductions, and are called Jacob's well. Once they have now been accurately understood, one must go up from them to Jesus, that he may freely give us the fountain of water that leaps into eternal life. But everyone does not draw water from Jacob's well in the same way. . . . Some who are wise in the Scriptures drink as Jacob and his sons. But others who are simpler and more innocent, the so-called sheep of Christ,[28] drink as Jacob's livestock. And others, misunderstanding the Scriptures and maintaining certain irreverent things on the pretext that they have apprehended the Scriptures, drink as the Samaritan woman drank before she believed in Jesus. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.37-39.[29]

This Well Is the Grace of the Spirit. Ambrose: This well is clearly the grace of the Spirit, a stream proceeding from the living fountain. The Holy Spirit, then, is also the fountain of eternal life. . . . This water, the grace of the Spirit, is so refreshing. Who will give this fountain to my breast? Let it spring up in me, let what gives eternal life flow on me. Let that fountain overflow on us and not flow away. . . . How shall I keep this water so that it does not flow or glide away? On the Holy Spirit 1.16.180-81.[30]

4:12 *Greater Than the Patriarch Jacob?*

Two Reasons Samaritans Claimed Jacob. Cyril of Alexandria: The Samaritans then were aliens (for they were colonists of the Babylonians), but they call Jacob their father for two reasons. They inhabited a country bordering on Jewish land and so, as neighbors, they were influenced by their worship and were accustomed to boast of the Jews' ancestors. Besides, it was really true that the greater number of the inhabitants of Samaria were sprung from the root of Jacob. For Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, having gathered together ten tribes of Israel and the half-tribe of Ephraim, departed from Jerusalem in the time of the kingdom of the son of Solomon, and took Samaria and built houses and cities there. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.[31]

Jesus Is Greater Than Jacob. Chrysostom: When the woman objects, "Are you greater than our father Jacob?" Jesus does not reply, "Actually, I am greater," which would make him sound like he is boasting since there was no proof at this point. Nonetheless, his answer implies it. . . . It is as if he said, If Jacob is honored because he gave you this water, what would you say if I give you far better water than this? . . . He makes the comparison, however, not to put Jacob down but to honor himself. Notice, Jesus does not say that the water is inferior or vile. Rather, he asserts a simple fact of nature: whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.1.[32]

The Best Well Around. Chrysostom: It is as if she said, you cannot say that Jacob gave us this spring and then used another for himself. For he and his descendants drank from it, which they would not have done if they had another well that was better. Therefore, you cannot then give me water from this spring. And you do not have a better spring, unless you confess that you are greater than Jacob. Where then does the water come from then that you promise to give us? Homilies on the Gospel of John 31.4.[33]

4:13 *Those Who Drink of This Water Will Thirst Again*

The Water That Satisfies. Theodore of

[27]FC 47:421. [28]Jn 10:26. [29]FC 89:76*; SC 222:50-52. [30]NPNF 2 10:114**. [31]LF 43:208**. [32]NPNF 1 14:111-12**. [33]NPNF 1 14:110*.

Mopsuestia: There is a great difference, he says, between that water [in the well] and the water I promise to give. That [water], after they have drunk it, extinguishes their thirst for a short time. But then, when it has been consumed according to its nature, it leaves the one who shortly before had drunk it thirsty again. The water that I give is such in its nature that not only is it not consumed and does not leave the one who drinks it oppressed by thirst, but on the contrary, it becomes in him like a spring gushing up forever. The water from a spring does not run out, nor does it need to be brought from another place or to be introduced, but it constantly offers perpetual nourishment to those who want it. In a similar way also the virtue of this water provides the one who receives it with perpetual help and will always preserve him and not allow him to perish. Therefore the one who receives this grace will never reach death. He said what he did for good reason, because this is what the virtue of the Spirit is. And so we also receive from him the firstfruits of the Spirit with the hope of the future resurrection. Since now this operation is performed symbolically, we hope then to receive the perfect grace when, through his participation, we will remain imperishable. Commentary on John 2.4.13-14.[34]

Ideas That Do Not Satisfy and Ones That Give Eternal Life. Origen: One must investigate what is meant by "will thirst" in the statement "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again." . . . What is meant in the first place would be something like this: he who partakes of supposedly profound thoughts, even if he is satisfied for a little while and accepts the ideas that are drawn out and that he thinks he has discovered to be most profound, will, however, when he has reconsidered them, raise new questions. . . . But [the Word] says, I have the teaching that becomes a fountain of living water in the one who has received what I have declared. And he who has received of my water will receive so great a benefit that a fountain capable of discovering everything that is investigated will gush forth within him. The waters will leap upward. His understanding also will spring up and fly as swiftly as possible in accordance with this briskly flowing water, the springing and leaping itself carrying him to that higher life that is eternal. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.13, 15-16.[35]

Pleasures of the World Never Satisfy Our Thirst. Augustine: Let us not overlook the fact that it is something spiritual that the Lord was promising. What does he mean when he says, "Whoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again"? It is true both for this water and what the water signified. Since the water in the well is the pleasure of the world in its dark depth: from this people draw it with the vessel of lusts. Stooping forward, they let down the lust to reach the pleasure fetched from the depth of the well, and they enjoy the pleasure and the preceding lust that they let down to fetch it. For he who has not dispatched his lust in advance cannot get to the pleasure. Consider lust, then, as the vessel and pleasure as the water from the depth of the well. When one has gotten into the pleasure of this world, whether it be food or drink, a bath, a show, an affair, is there any way he or she will not thirst again? Therefore, "whoever shall drink of this water," he said "will thirst again." But if he receives water from me, "he shall never thirst." "We shall be satisfied," it says, "with the good things of your house."[36] Of what water, then, is [Jesus] to give except of which it is said, "With you is the fountain of life"?[37] For how shall they thirst who "shall be drunk with the fatness of your house"?[38] Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.16.[39]

4:14 *The Water of Eternal Life*

Immortality and the Holy Spirit. Apolli-

[34]CSCO 4 3:88-89. [35]FC 89:71-72**; SC 222:40-44. [36]See Ps 65:4 (64:5 LXX, Vg). [37]See Ps 36:9 (35:10 LXX, Vg). [38]See Ps 36:8 (35:9 LXX, Vg). [39]NPNF 1 7:102-3*. See also *Sermon* 53.4 (*WSA* 3 3:67).

naris of Laodicea: He says that visible water can quench one's thirst for a little while, but the unseen water cures one of thirst altogether because there is no longer a thirst for life when immortality is gushing forth on you. What follows clearly demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is what is freely being promised here, as the spiritual water spoken of here corresponds with the physical water spoken of. . . . The Spirit of wisdom, whose presence is unceasing, gives of its abundance freely. Fragments on John 17.[40]

The Fire and Water of the Spirit. Chrysostom: Sometimes Scripture calls the grace of the Spirit "fire," other times it calls it "water." In this way, it shows that these names are not descriptive of its essence but of its operation. For the Spirit, which is invisible and simple, cannot be made up of different substances. . . . In the same way that he calls the Spirit by the name of "fire," alluding to the rousing and warming property of grace and its power of destroying sins, he calls it "water" in order to highlight the cleansing it does and the great refreshment it provides those minds that receive it. For it makes the willing soul like a kind of garden, thick with all kinds of fruitful and productive trees, allowing it neither to feel despondency nor the plots of Satan. It quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.1.[41]

Baptism Extinguishes the Fires of Hell. Maximus of Turin: Frequently indeed we see that water poured out extinguishes a fire. But sometimes we see the opposite—that huge balls of fire consume streams of water and that the flames grow more vehement, drawing strength from the water as if from food, so that the water does not seem to put out the burning but to aggravate it. What, then, is that water that consumes flames but is not itself consumed? It is, I think, that which, flowing in the bath from the fountain of Christ is not consumed by sins but consumes the fires of Gehenna, and which, once poured out on people in baptism, itself both lives in them and puts out the fire of hell. It is clear that it lives in people from what the Lord says [here]. . . . But in a wonderful way the water of Christ both vivifies and extinguishes by one and the same operation. For it vivifies souls and extinguishes sins. The souls are renewed by the refreshment of its bath; the sins are consumed by its surging stream. And as far as the higher grace of baptism is concerned, in the heavens a mystery is celebrated and in hell Gehenna is extinguished. In the one the waters flow; in the other the fire grows cold. In the one we are submerged in the bath; in the other we are set free from the underworld. Yet there is nothing astonishing if hell is opened by the sacrament of baptism since heaven is also unlocked. For these places are opened so that freedom and grace might come together in the bath of Christ—grace from heaven and freedom from hell. Sermon 22a.3.[42]

The Spirit in the Word Suffices to Instruct. Cyril of Alexandria: We must know again that the Savior here calls the grace of the Holy Spirit water. If anyone drinks of this water, he will have the gift of the divine teaching constantly welling up from within him. He needs no admonition from others. Rather, it is enough to exhort those who thirst after the divine and heavenly Word that they are yet living in this present life and on earth along with the holy prophets and apostles. They are heirs of their ministrations of whom it was written, "And you shall draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation."[43] Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.[44]

The Samaritan Woman More Receptive Than Nicodemus. Chrysostom: The woman immediately believed, showing that she was not only much wiser than Nicodemus but also more courageous. For when he heard ten thousand things like this, he neither invited any others to

[40]JKGK 10. [41]NPNF 1 14:111*. [42]ACW 50:56-57. [43]Is 12:3. [44]LF 43:209*.

hear what he heard, nor did he himself speak openly [about his encounter]. But she exhibited the actions of an apostle, preaching the gospel to everyone she could and calling them to Jesus. She even drew out a whole city to hear him. When Nicodemus heard Jesus, his reaction was, "How can these things be?" And when Christ set before him a clear illustration utilizing "the wind," even then he did not receive the Word. But this is not the case with the woman. At first she doubted, but afterwards, receiving the Word not by any regular demonstration but in the form of an assertion, she immediately hurried to embrace it. For when Christ said, "It shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," immediately the woman said, "Give me this water so that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.1.[45]

4:15 *Give Me This Water, That I May Not Thirst*

She Venerates Jesus More Than Jacob. Chrysostom: See how the woman is led step by step to a higher understanding. First, she thought Jesus was some lax Jew who was transgressing the law. . . . Then, when she heard about the living water, she thought it meant material water. Afterwards, she understands it as spoken spiritually and believes that it can take away thirst. However, she does not yet know what it is, only understanding that it was superior to material things . . . "The woman says to him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst nor come here to draw.'" Observe how she prefers him to the patriarch Jacob for whom she previously had had such veneration. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.1.[46]

Labor Needed No More. Augustine: The woman is still focused on her bodily needs. She is delighted with the idea that she will never thirst again and takes this promise of our Lord in this way. And this too will be the case, although she will have to wait until the resurrection of the dead. But she wanted this now. God had indeed once allowed Elijah to neither hunger nor thirst for forty days, and if he could grant this for forty days, why not forever? This is what she longed for, to lack nothing and to be spared her hard labor, because she was coming to that fountain day after day, burdened with that heavy weight on her shoulders that was supposed to supply what she lacked. . . . Her poverty obliged her to work beyond what her strength could handle. If only she could hear the invitation, "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you!"[47] This is, in fact, what Jesus was saying to her. He was telling her that she did not need to work like this any longer, but she did not yet understand. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.15, 17.[48]

---

[45]NPNF 1 14:112. [46]NPNF 1 14:112**. [47]Mt 11:28. [48]NPNF 1 7:102-3*.

Worshiping in Spirit and Truth John 4:16-26

Overview: When Jesus tells the Samaritan woman to call her husband, she replies she has no husband. Her answer is a form of confession because she truly has no legitimate husband (Origen). Jesus' request exposes her guilt (Chrysostom) because she is involved in an illicit union (Augustine). One should realize that it is not the union of pleasure that makes a marriage but the approval of the law and the bond of pure love (Cyril of Alexandria). But the woman's actions also mirror that of the church here: She denies having many husbands, just as the church denies having many gods. But when in repentance she comes to the well of baptism, her sixth and true husband betroths her to himself and rescues her from herself and her sin (Romanus).

There is no other way for the woman to account for Jesus' amazing knowledge except to posit that he is a prophet. She references "our fathers," by whom she means the patriarch Abraham who had offered Isaac on this mountain (Chrysostom). There was a dispute between the Jews and the Samaritans as to which mountain was holier: Mount Gerizim, because it was the place of blessing when Israel crossed the Jordan, or Mount Zion, where Solomon built the temple (Origen). Christ calls for faith from the woman, leading her higher and higher in her understanding (Chrysostom). He speaks of a future worship that will not be bound to a specific place for the dwelling of God (Cyril of Alexandria) but will rather be built on the living stones of the church (Origen). In saying, "You worship what you do not know, while we worship what we do know," Jesus proclaimed that salvation is from the Jews but not only for the Jews (Augustine). It is also true that salvation was contained in the Jewish Scriptures (Origen), but the intimation is that neither the Jewish nor the Samaritan sanctuaries of worship will survive ultimately (Theodore). "The hour is coming" is repeated a second time with the addition of "and now is" to allude to worship that occurs now as an approximation of that more perfect worship that is yet to come (Origen). God is adored not in a place but in the Spirit. Those who worship the Father in spirit ultimately worship the Trinity (Ambrose). The Spirit he gives, as he seeks us through the Son, makes us alive to a life that is more divine (Origen).

Jesus identifies God as Spirit here to distinguish him from corporeal beings, since God is by nature incomprehensible and unlimited (Origen). But he is a being, and not simply wind (Didymus). Identifying God as Spirit is also appropriate since it is the Spirit who makes alive (Origen). Because he is without a body and is everywhere, true worship is not bound to just one place; rather, he is honored everywhere by those who approach him with a pure conscience and with the right intention (Theodore). There is freedom and knowledge for those who worship the Spirit in spirit and in truth (Hilary). When we worship him in spirit, we do as Elijah did when he found him in the still small voice (Origen). True prayer can only take place through the

Spirit (Evagrius). Those who no longer fulfill the desires of the flesh walk in the Spirit and thus worship in the Spirit (Origen) as they are illumined by him (Basil). In other words, pray in the temple after you become the temple (Augustine). Spiritual prayer is appropriately offered to one who is Spirit (Abraham of Nathpar).

The woman knew that the Messiah would teach, since the Samaritans also expected the Christ (Chrysostom), but she did not know who it was who was teaching her at that moment (Augustine). It should be mentioned that the Samaritans too had their false christs (Origen). Jesus' gradual revelation of himself, however, leads her to a confession and worship of him as the true Messiah (Ephrem).

4:16 *Go, Call Your Husband*

The Value of Her Condemning Herself. Origen: She already had, as it were, something of the water that leaps into eternal life since she had said . . . "I have no husband," having condemned herself on the basis of her association with such a husband. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.50.[1]

The Woman's Haste to Receive the Gift. Chrysostom: Since the woman demonstrates some urgency in asking for the promised water, Jesus says to her, "Go, call your husband," to show that he too ought to have a share in these things. But she was in a hurry to receive the gift and wanted to conceal her guilt (for she still imagined she was speaking to a man). "The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.'" Christ answers her with a timely rebuke, exposing her in regard to her former husbands and as to her present one whom she had concealed. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.2.[2]

4:17-18 *The Woman's Marital History*

An Illicit Union. Augustine: Understand that the woman did not have a lawful husband but had rather formed an illicit[3] union with someone who was not her lawful husband. . . . And, just in case the woman might suppose that the Lord knew about this because he had learned this from someone—and not because he knew it by his own divinity—[he says], Listen to something that you have *not* said, "For you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband." Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.20.[4]

Christian Marriage Is Blameless. Cyril of Alexandria: The Savior was not ignorant that she had no lawful husband, and his inquiry about her husband was not the plea of one who needed hidden things revealed. . . . He had full knowledge of her circumstances and helpfully affirms her comment that she has no husband, although she had had so many. For it is not the union of pleasure but the approval of the law and the bond of pure love that makes marriage blameless. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.[5]

She Meets Her Sixth Husband. Romanus Melodus:
[Jesus says] "If you wish that I give you the streams of pure water,
Go, and call your husband; I shall not imitate your reproach;
I shall not say: 'You are a woman of Samaria, and how is it that you ask for water?'
I do not increase your thirst; for I have brought you to thirst through thirst.
I exaggerated being thirsty and I was tormented by thirst in order that I might reveal you as thirsty.
Go, then, and call your husband and return."
The woman said, "I think that I have no husband," and the Creator said to her:

[1]FC 89:79**; SC 222:58. [2]NPNF 1 14:113**. [3]Or "irregular." [4]NPNF 1 7:104*. [5]LF 43:210**. Augustine makes an allegorical comparison between the five husbands and the five books of the law. See *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 15.21.

"Truly do you have none? You have five, the
sixth you do not possess,[6]
So that you may receive
Exceeding great joy and redemption."

O wise enigmas! O wise characteristics!
In the faith of the holy woman is pictured
All the features of the church in true colors
which do not grow old;
For the way in which the woman denied a husband when she had many,
Is just the way the church denied many gods,
like husbands,
And left them and became betrothed
to one Master in coming forth from the
water.
She had five husbands and the sixth she did
not have; and leaving the five
Husbands of impiety, she now takes Thee, as
the sixth, as she comes
From the water,
Exceeding great joy and redemption. . . .

The espoused church of the nations,[7] then, left
these things,
And she hurries here to the well of the baptismal font
And denies the things of the past, just as the
woman of Samaria did;
For she did not conceal what had formerly
been true from Him who knows all in
advance,
But she said, " . . . Even if I formerly had husbands, I do not now wish to have
These husbands which I did have; for I now
possess Thee who hast now taken me in
Thy net;
And I am by faith rescued[8] from the filth of my
sins
That I may receive
Exceeding great joy and redemption."

Kontakion on the Woman of Samaria 9.11-12, 14.[9]

4:19 *You Are a Prophet*

No Other Way to Account for Jesus' Knowledge. Chrysostom: The woman is not offended at Christ's rebuke. She does not leave him and go away—far from it. Her admiration for him is raised: "The woman said to him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.'" . . . "I perceive" means "You appear to me to be a prophet." And having come to this belief [that Jesus was a prophet], she does not ask any questions relating to life, health or sickness of the body. . . . She is not troubled about thirst; rather, she is eager to be taught. Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.2-3.[10]

4:20 *Our Ancestors Worshiped on This Mountain*

"Our Fathers" Designates Abraham. Chrysostom: By "our fathers," she means Abraham, who is said to have offered up Isaac here.[11] Homilies on the Gospel of John 32.2.[12]

Origins of Disagreement. Origen: On the statement "our fathers" and what follows one must understand the disagreement between the Samaritans and the Jews over the place they considered holy. For the Samaritans worship God on the mountain called Gerizim, because they consider it to be holy. Moses refers to this mountain in Deuteronomy when he says, "And Moses commanded the people in that day saying, 'These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed the Jordan.'"[13] . . . The Jews, on the other hand, because they think Zion is divine and God's dwelling place, think it has been chosen by the Father of all. For this reason they say Solomon built the temple on Zion, and all the levitical and priestly service is performed

[6]Christ, in this case, is the sixth. The church is his bride. [7]"The woman of the nations" is the church, which reaches out beyond Jews to Samaria. [8]Lit. "to bail out," pointing to the act of drawing water from the well. It also connotes "to be exhausted from." [9]*KRBM* 1:91-93. [10]NPNF 1 14:113**. [11]The majority of patristic tradition identified Zion (or Moriah, according to the Jewish tradition), rather than Gerizim as the place of Isaac's sacrifice. [12]NPNF 1 14:113*.

there. As a consequence of these assumptions, each nation has considered its fathers to have worshiped God, but one on this mountain and one on the other. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.77-79.[14]

4:21 *Believe Me, the Hour Is Coming*

Christ Calls for Faith. Chrysostom: Everywhere, beloved, we have need of faith. Faith is the mother of all good, the medicine of salvation in order to obtain any real good. Without it, it is impossible to possess any of the great doctrines. Those who try anything without it are like those who venture on the sea without a boat and are drowned because they can barely swim. . . . Similarly, those who try to figure things out before they have learned anything are prone to suffer shipwreck. . . . To insure that this does not happen to us, let us hold fast to the sacred anchor[15] by which Christ brings over the Samaritan woman now. Homilies on the Gospel of John 33.1, 2.[16]

Christian Worship Is Not Bound to a Particular Place. Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus equally condemns the foolishness of all, saying that the worship of both Jews and Samaritans shall be transformed to a truer worship. Jesus in effect says that people will no longer seek after a particular place where God properly dwells. Rather, Jesus is both able to fill and able to contain all things. And so, they shall worship the Lord "every one from his place,"[17] as one of the holy prophets says. Jesus implies that his own sojourn in the world with a body is the time and season for a change of such customs. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.4.[18]

The Church Built Out of Living Stones. Origen: The Jews stand for those who think intelligently and salvation is from them. The Samaritans represent the heterodox. So they deify Gerizim, which means "separation" or "division." . . . The Jews, on the other hand, revere Zion, which signifies "watchtower." . . . Inasmuch, then, as the hour mentioned by the Lord has not yet come when they worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, one must flee the mountain of the Samaritans and worship God on Zion, where Jerusalem lies. Christ calls this Jerusalem the city of the great king.[19] And what else would the city of the great king, the true Jerusalem, be than the church that is built of living stones? This is the place of the holy priesthood, the place where spiritual sacrifices are offered to God by people who are spiritual and who have understood the spiritual law.[20] But when the fullness of time is imminent,[21] when one is no longer in the flesh but is in the Spirit and everyone is no longer still in the type but is in truth, then one must no longer bring true worship and perfect piety to Jerusalem to be offered. Such a person has been prepared so that he is like those whom God seeks to worship him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.81, 83, 85.[22]

4:22 *Worship and Salvation from the Jews*

Christ Born of the Jews. Augustine: Divergent walls have come to the cornerstone, the Jews from there, the Gentiles from here. You have seen and you know that the further walls are from the corner, the further they are from each other. As they approach the corner, so they approach each other. When they reach the corner, they join each other. Christ [as cornerstone] has joined Jews and Gentiles, who were far away from each other. . . .

Those who came from the Jews are to be counted as being part of a good wall because those who came did not remain in the ruin.[23] We have become one, they and we; but in the One, not in ourselves. Of what lineage was Christ

[13]Deut 27:11-12. [14]FC 89:84*; SC 222:70-72. [15]Faith; cf. 1 Tim 1:19. [16]NPNF 1 14:115**. [17]Zeph 2:11. [18]LF 43: 211**. [19]See Mt 5:35. [20]See 1 Pet 2:5; Rom 7:14. [21]See Gal 4:4. [22]FC 89:85-86**; SC 222:72-76. [23]Augustine may be alluding allegorically to the fallen walls of Jerusalem, destroyed in the captivity, which symbolize Judaism apart from Christ.

born? Of the Jews. That is what you find written: "Salvation is from the Jews," but not only for the Jews. He did not say, after all, "Salvation is for the Jews" but "Salvation is from the Jews." Sermon 375.1.[24]

Salvation from the Jewish Scriptures. Origen: The "you" refers literally to the Samaritans but anagogically to all who are heterodox regarding the Scriptures. The "we" literally means the Jews, but allegorically it means, "I, the Word, and all who are changed by me receive salvation from the Jewish Scriptures." For the mystery now revealed was revealed both through the prophetic Scriptures and through the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.101.[25]

The Sanctuaries Will End. Theodore of Mopsuestia: It is proper for Jesus to say now, "Believe me," after he had clearly demonstrated the truth of the words that he had spoken to her before. "The hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem." This, he says, is what you want to be instructed about. Know then that there will be a time when both places will end. However in order that it might not appear that Jews and Samaritans had to be considered equal (because he predicted the end of both their sanctuaries) he says, "You worship what you do not know," that is, you Samaritans; "We worship what we know," that is, we Jews. Then he adds, "For salvation is from the Jews." He did not say "in the Jews" but "from the Jews." In fact, salvation was not in them but from them because Christ in flesh came from them. Therefore, he says, the truth is by the Jews, but both sanctuaries will be emptied out. Commentary on John 2.4.21-22.[26]

4:23 *A Time That Is Coming and Now Is*

Sons Worship the "Father." Origen: Twice it is written, "The hour is coming." The first time it is written without the addition of "and now is." I think the first alludes to that purely spiritual worship that will begin at the time of perfection. The second, however, means, I think, the worship of those being perfected in this life so far as it is possible for human nature to progress. It is possible, therefore, to worship the Father in spirit and in truth not only when "the hour comes" but also when it "now is." . . . For just as the angels do not worship the Father in Jerusalem because they worship the Father in a better way than those in Jerusalem, so those who can already be like the angels[27] in their attitude will not worship the Father in Jerusalem but in a better way than those in Jerusalem. . . .

When, however, someone worships neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, once the hour has come he worships the Father boldly because he has become a son. Therefore it is not said, "worship God" but "worship the Father." . . .

True worshipers worship the Father in spirit and truth not only in the coming hour but also in the present. But those who worship in spirit, since they worship as they have received, worship at present in the pledge of the Spirit.[28] But when they shall receive the Spirit in his fullness, they will worship the Father in spirit. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.86-88, 99-100, 112.[29]

God Is Adored Not in a Place but in Spirit. Ambrose: She learned the divine mysteries: that God is spirit and is adored not in a place but in spirit. She also learned that Christ is the Messiah and therefore that he who was still awaited by the Jews had already come. Hearing these things, that woman, who manifests the beauty of the church, learned and believed the mysteries of the law. Isaac, or the Soul 4.26.[30]

Worshiping the Father in Spirit Is Wor-

[24]*WSA* 3 10:329*. [25]FC 89:89**; SC 222:84. [26]CSCO 4 3:90-91. [27]See Lk 20:36. [28]See 2 Cor 5:5. [29]FC 89:86, 88, 91. [30]FC 65:27*.

shiping the Trinity. Ambrose: What does it mean, then, that the Father is worshiped in Christ, except that the Father is in Christ and the Father speaks in Christ and abides in Christ? He does not abide, indeed, as a body in a body, for God is not a body. . . . So not an engrafting of a body is meant, but unity of power. Therefore, by unity of power, Christ is jointly worshiped in the Father when God the Father is worshiped in Christ. In the same way then, by unity of the same power the Spirit is jointly worshiped in God when God is worshiped in the Spirit. . . . When God is said to be worshiped in truth (by the proper meaning of the word itself often expressed after the same manner), it ought to be understood that the Son too is worshiped. So, in the same way, the Spirit is also worshiped because God is worshiped in Spirit. Therefore the Father is worshiped both with the Son and with the Spirit, because the Trinity is worshiped. On the Holy Spirit 3.11.82, 85.[31]

The Father Seeks True Worshipers Through Jesus. Origen: If the Father seeks true worshipers, he seeks them through the Son, "who came to seek and to save that which was lost," purifying and educating those whom he equips to be true worshipers through the Word and sound doctrine. . . .

God is a Spirit. . . . God, who brings us into the true life, is called Spirit, and in the Scriptures, the Spirit is said to make us alive.[32] It is clear from this that "making alive" refers not only to ordinary life but to what is more divine. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.119, 140.[33]

4:24a *God is Spirit*

"Spirit" Distinguishs God from the Material World. Origen: In the language of the Gospel itself, it is declared that "God is a Spirit." . . . To the opinion of the woman that God is rightly worshiped according to the privileges of the different localities . . . the Savior answered that anyone who would follow the Lord must lay aside all preference for particular places. He expressed himself as follows: "The hour is coming when neither in Jerusalem nor on this mountain shall the true worshipers worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Observe how logically he has joined together the spirit and the truth. He called God a Spirit so that he might distinguish him from bodies; and he named him the truth in order to distinguish him from a shadow or an image. For they who worshiped in Jerusalem worshiped God neither in truth nor in spirit, being in subjection to the shadow or image of heavenly things. And such also was the case with those who worshiped on Mount Gerizim. Having refuted, then, as well as we could, every notion that might suggest that we were to think of God as in any degree corporeal, we go on to say that, according to strict truth, God is incomprehensible and incapable of being measured. On First Principles 1.1.4-5.[34]

The Spirit Is a Being, Not Wind. Didymus the Blind: Since God cannot be seen, his incorporeal nature follows directly on his invisibility. For if God is unseen, then he must be incorporeal. And if this is the case, then the Spirit spoken of here cannot be air that has been set in motion. For among people a body reveals its spirit; however, we cannot say the same about God. Just as the Light spoken of here is not a physical light, but an intellectual light since it illuminates the mind, not the face, and just as he who is called Love is not a disposition but rather a Being who loves what he has made and takes care of it, so he does not address the Spirit as a blast of wind, but rather presents him as an incorporeal and life-giving Being. Everyone who has learned that "God is spirit" worships him spiritually "in spirit and truth" and no longer worships the God of all under the shadows of types. He makes a distinction between the letter and the spirit and distin-

[31]NPNF 2 10:146-47**. [32]2 Cor 3:6. [33]FC 89:92, 97**; SC 222:94, 106. [34]ANF 4:243*. See also Augustine *Letter* 238.

guishes between the type and the truth. The letter and the type were useful for a time, but when the truth came, that is, when Christ arrived, all these things came to an end. Fragments on John 3.[35]

God Is Spirit in Bringing Us True Life. Origen: Since we are made alive by the spirit[36] as far as ordinary life is concerned—and what we usually mean by the term "life" concerns when the spirit that is in us draws, what is called, in the literal sense, the breath of life[37]—I suppose it has been understood from this that God, who brings us to true life, is called spirit. In the scriptures, the spirit is said to make alive. It is clear that this "making alive" refers not to the ordinary life, but to the more divine life. For the letter also kills and produces death, but it is not death in the sense of separation of the soul from the body, but death in the sense of the separation of the soul from God, and from the Lord himself, and from the Holy Spirit. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.140.[38]

God Is Without a Body and Is Everywhere. Theodore of Mopsuestia: God is of an incorporeal nature and cannot be circumscribed into any one place. Rather, he is everywhere, and it is necessary that he be worshiped according to this understanding. The true worshiper is the one who honors him with the right intention and believes with a pure conscience that everywhere he can speak with the one who is incomprehensible. Commentary on John 2 4.23-24.[39]

Freedom with Knowledge in Worship. Hilary of Poitiers: We see that the woman, her mind full of inherited tradition, thought that God must be worshiped either on a mountain, as at Samaria, or in a temple, as at Jerusalem. . . . The prejudices of both confined the all-embracing and illimitable God to the crest of a hill or the vault of a building. God is invisible, incomprehensible, immeasurable. The Lord said that the time had come when God should be worshiped neither on mountain nor in temple. For the Spirit cannot be shut up, as if in a cabin, or confined. It is omnipresent in space and time, and under all conditions it is present in its fullness. Therefore he said that they are the true worshipers who shall worship in the Spirit and in truth. And these who are to worship God the Spirit in the Spirit shall have the One for the means,[40] the Other for the object,[41] of their reverence. For each of the two stand in a different relation to the worshiper. The words "God is Spirit" do not alter the fact that the Holy Spirit has a name of his own and that he is the gift to us. . . . The imparted gift and the object of reverence were clearly shown when Christ taught that God, being Spirit, must be worshiped in the Spirit, and revealed what freedom and knowledge, what boundless scope for adoration, lay in this worship of God the Spirit, in the Spirit. On the Trinity 2.31.[42]

4:24b *Worship in Spirit and Truth*

The Spirit in the Still Small Voice. Origen: In the [First] Book of Kings, the Spirit of the Lord, who came to Elijah, makes the following suggestions concerning God: "For he said, you shall go out tomorrow and stand before the Lord on the mountain. Beyond, the Lord will pass by as a great and strong wind[43] destroying mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord. The Lord is not in the wind (but in other texts we find: "in the spirit of the Lord"). After the wind, an earthquake; the Lord is not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, a fire; the Lord is not in the fire. And after the fire, the sound of a gentle breeze."[44] Perhaps, indeed, these words reveal how many must experience the fire of the direct apprehension of the Lord. . . . But who

[35]*JKGK* 178. [36]See Gen 2:7, 2 Cor 3:6. [37]Gen 2:7. [38]FC 89:97**; SC 222:106. [39]CSCO 4 3:91. [40]Worship *in* the Spirit. [41]The Spirit as God is to be worshiped. [42]NPNF 2 9:60-61*. [43]*Pneuma*, which means wind, as well as spirit. [44]See 1 Kings 19:11-12.

could more properly tell us about whom God is than the Son? "For no one has known the Father except the Son."[45] We too aspire to know how God is spirit as the Son reveals it, and to worship God in the spirit that gives life and not in the letter that kills. We want to honor God in truth and no longer in types, shadows and examples[46] even as the angels do not serve God in examples and the shadow of heavenly realities but in realities that belong to the spiritual and heavenly order. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.145-46.[47]

The Theologian's Prayer. Evagrius of Pontus: If you wish to pray, you have need of God, "who gives prayer to him who prays."[48] Invoke him, then, saying, "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come"[49]—that is, the Holy Spirit and your only begotten Son. For this is what he taught us, saying, "Worship the Father in spirit and in truth." He who prays in spirit and in truth is no longer dependent on created things when honoring the Creator but praises him for and in himself.[50] If you are a theologian, you will pray truly. And if you pray truly, you are a theologian. Chapters on Prayer 59-61.[51]

Those Who Walk in the Spirit Are Worshiping in the Spirit. Origen: If there are many who profess to worship the Creator, there are some who are no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, because they walk in the spirit and do not fulfill the desire of the flesh.[52] And there are others who are not in the spirit but in the flesh and wage war according to the flesh.[53] If this is so, then one must say that those who worship the Father in spirit and not in flesh, in truth and not in types, are the true worshipers, and that those who do not so worship are not true worshipers. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.109.[54]

Illumination of the Spirit Enables Worship. Basil the Great: To worship *in* the Spirit implies that our intelligence has been enlightened. Consider the words spoken to the Samaritan woman. She was deceived by local custom into believing that worship could only be offered in a specific place. But the Lord, attempting to correct her, said that worship ought to be offered in Spirit and in truth. By *truth* he clearly meant himself. If we say that worship offered *in* the Son (the truth) is worship offered *in* the Father's image, we can say the same about worship offered *in* the Spirit since the Spirit in himself reveals the divinity of the Lord. The Holy Spirit cannot be divided from the Father and the Son in worship. If you remain outside the Spirit, you cannot worship at all, and if you are *in* him you cannot separate him from God. Light cannot be separated from what it makes visible, and it is impossible for you to recognize Christ, the image of the invisible God, unless the Spirit enlightens you. Once you see the image, you cannot ignore the light; you see the light and the image simultaneously. It is fitting that when we see Christ, the brightness of God's glory, it is always through the illumination of the Spirit. Through Christ the image, may we be led to the Father, for he bears the seal of the Father's very likeness. On the Spirit 26.64.[55]

Pray in the Temple After You Become the Temple. Augustine: "O for a mountain to pray on," you cry, "high and inaccessible so that I may be nearer to God and God may hear me better. For he dwells on high." . . . Yes, God dwells on high, but he is also considerate of the humble. . . . Come down so that you may come near him. But do you want to ascend? Ascend, but do not seek a mountain. "The ascents," it said, "are in his heart, in the valley of weeping."[56] A valley has humility. Therefore, do everything within. Even if perhaps you seek some lofty place, some holy place, make yourself a temple for god within yourself. "For the temple of God is holy, which means you."[57] Would you pray in a temple? Pray

[45]Mt 11:27. [46]See Heb 8:5. [47]FC 89:98-99; SC 222:108-10. [48]1 Sam 2:9 LXX. [49]Mt 6:9-10. [50]God. [51]*TP* 1:62. [52]Gal 5:16. [53]2 Cor 10:3. [54]FC 89:90*; SC 222:88. [55]*OHS* 97. [56]Ps 84:6 (83:7 LXX, Vg).

in yourself. But first be a temple of God, for he in his temple hears the one who prays. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.25.[58]

Spiritual Prayer. Abraham of Nathpar: Do not imagine, my beloved, that prayer consists solely of words or that it can be learned by means of words. No, listen to the truth of the matter from our Lord: spiritual prayer is not learned and does not reach fullness as a result of either learning or the repetition of words. For it is not to a man that you are praying, before whom you can repeat a well-composed speech. It is to him who is Spirit that you are directing the movements of prayer. You should pray, therefore, in spirit, seeing that he is spirit. He shows that no special place or vocal utterance is required for someone who prays in fullness to God.[59] On Prayer and Silence 1-2.[60]

4:25 *When Messiah Comes, He Will Teach Us All Things*

The Samaritans Expected Christ Too. Chrysostom: How is it that the Samaritans expected Christ's coming, since they only acknowledged the books of Moses? Their expectation came from the writings of Moses themselves. . . . Jacob prophesies of Christ, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until he comes to whom it belongs, and he is the expectation of nations."[61] And Moses says, "The Lord your God shall raise up a prophet from the midst of you, of your brothers."[62] Homilies on the Gospel of John 33.2.[63]

Messiah Will Level the Mountain and the Temple. Augustine: She says in effect, The Jews now contend for the temple, we for the mountain. But he, when he comes, will level the mountain, overthrow the temple and teach us how to pray in spirit and in truth. She knew who could teach her, but she did not yet know him that was now teaching her. . . . The Hebrew *Messias* is in Greek *Christ* and means in Latin the anointed one. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.27.[64]

False Christs Arose Among Samaritans Too. Origen: The Samaritan woman, who accepts only the Pentateuch of Moses, expects the coming of Christ as announced only by the law. The Samaritans probably expected the visitation on the basis of Jacob's blessing on Judah, when he said . . . "A ruler shall not fail from Judah."[65]. . . We must not fail to remark that, as Jesus arose from among the Jews, not only saying that he was the Christ but also proving it, so also a certain Dositheus arose from among the Samaritans and declared himself to be the Christ who had been prophesied. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.154, 162.[66]

4:26 *I Who Speak to You Am He*

Jesus' Gradual Revelation of Himself. Ephrem the Syrian: "And if you are a king, how is it that you are asking me for water?" It was not in this way that he first made reference about himself to her, but rather first as a Jew, and then as a prophet, and thereafter as the Messiah. Step by step he brought and placed her at the highest level. At first, she saw him as a thirsty person, then as a Jew, then a prophet, and afterwards as God. As he was thirsting, she was persuading him; as he was a Jew, she loathed him; as he was a person of learning, she made enquiry of him; in his being a prophet, she was rebuked by him; as he was the Messiah, she worshiped him. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 12.18.[67]

[57]1 Cor 3:17. [58]NPNF 1 7:105-6**. [59]Abraham then cites Jn 4:21-24 as well as 1 Cor 14:15. [60]CS 101:191**. [61]Gen 49:10; Chrysostom also cites Gen 1:26 and Gen 18 as further proof. [62]Deut 18:15. [63]NPNF 1 14:116**. [64]NPNF 1 7:106**. [65]Gen 49:10. [66]FC 89:101-2*; SC 222:116, 120-22. [67]CB709:92.

THE HARVEST IS READY
JOHN 4:27-42

Overview: The disciples were amazed at Jesus' treatment of this woman, but she was made in the image of God as much as anyone else (Origen) and so Jesus sets an example of how one should regard women with respect (Cyril of Alexandria). She leaves behind the water jar as she now carries in herself (Romanus) the living water she had found there (Augustine). She returns to her own village and becomes an apostle as she speaks of what she has heard at the well (Origen), doing the work of an evangelist as well. She did all of this without any concern about how her former life might be perceived (Chrysostom).

Her exuberance follows the example of Jesus, who neglected food in his zeal for the church (Cyril of Alexandria). He, however, intimates to his disciples about a food they know nothing about, which provides nourishment to him from his Father (Origen). The disciples understand his words about food, however, about as much as the woman understands his words about the water (Augustine). He explains to his disciples that his hunger lies in the desire for our salvation, which is what he calls his food (Chrysostom). God's will is that we repent and are saved (Ambrose). The food of the Son is to accomplish this will of the Father, a will that becomes almost indistinguishable from his own. But the work Christ needs to do to accomplish that will is not completed at this point because he has not yet perfected us (Origen, Ambrose), and the human race has not yet been converted to the saving gospel (Theodore).

Jesus instructs his disciples to lift up their eyes so that their thoughts may be focused on what God wants to accomplish (Origen). The fields that are white for harvest are the multitudes of souls prepared for receiving the preaching of the gospel (Chrysostom). Both sowers and reapers rejoice together (Origen) as Moses and the

prophets prepared the harvest (Chrysostom), along with the seeds sown by Christ (Theodore). The harvest is then reaped by the glittering and sharp word of the apostles, who then bring their harvest to the floor of the church (Cyril of Alexandria). Jesus had done the spadework for the apostles as he cultivated the prophets from the beginning (Theodore).

The Samaritans ask Jesus to remain with them, which he does, remaining not only for them but for all who ask (Origen). The Evangelist does not relate what Jesus told them while he was with them, which often seems to be the case when the results are positive, as they were here when we are told that practically the whole city was convinced by his words (Chrysostom). The people then dismiss their first instructor in favor of getting instruction directly from the source (Origen, Chrysostom).

4:27 *Talking with a Samaritan Woman*

Jesus' Treatment of Women. Origen: We learn that he is meek and lowly in heart[1] and does not disdain to speak of such great matters with a woman carrying water who goes out of the city because of her great poverty and labors to draw water for herself. When the disciples arrive they are amazed, for they previously beheld the greatness of the divinity in him, and they marvel that so great a man was speaking with a woman. We, however, carried away with pride and arrogance, despise those below us and forget that the words "Let us make man according to our image and according to our likeness"[2] apply to each person. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.166-67.[3]

Gender Equality in the Gospel. Cyril of Alexandria: He shows here, as the one Creator of all, that he does not give men only this life through faith but imparts this faith to women as well. Let him that teaches in the church follow this pattern and not refuse to help women.[4] For in all things one must not follow one's own will but the service of preaching. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.[5]

4:28 *The Woman Left Her Water Jar*

The Woman Leaves Carrying Other Water. Romanus Melodus:

But when the Merciful One was near the spring, . . .
Then the woman of Samaria, coming from her native village, Sichar, arrived, and she had her urn on her shoulders;
And who would not call blessed the arrival and departure of this woman?
For she departed in filth; she entered into the figure of the church as blameless;
She departed, and she drew out life like a sponge.
She departed bearing water; she became a bearer of God;
And who does not bless
This woman; or rather who does not revere her, the type of the nations
As she brings
Exceeding great joy and redemption?

Kontakion on the Woman of Samaria 9.5.[6]

Before You Preach, Leave Your Water Jar. Augustine: Having heard, "I that speak with you am he," and having received Christ the Lord into her heart, what could she do now but leave her water jar and run to preach the gospel? She cast out lust and hurried to proclaim the truth. Let those who would preach the gospel learn: let them throw away their water jar at the well. You remember what I said before of the water jar.[7] It was a vessel with which the water was drawn, called *hydria,* from its Greek name, because water is *hydor* in Greek; just as if it were called *aquarium,* from the Latin. She threw away

[1]Mt 11:29. [2]Gen 1:26. [3]FC 89:103-4; SC 222:124-26. [4]In Cyril's day, it was rare for women to receive philosophical training. [5]LF 43:221**. [6]*KRBM* 1:89. [7]See Augustine's comment on Jn 4:13 for the symbolism of the water jar.

her water jar then, which was no longer of use but a burden to her, such was her eagerness to be satisfied with that water. Throwing her burden away to make Christ known, "she ran to the city and says to those men, 'Come, and see a man who told me everything I ever did.'" Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.30.[8]

The Samaritan Woman an Apostle. Origen: He also uses the woman as an apostle, as it were, to those in the city. His words to her are so forceful that she leaves her water jar to go to the city and tells them to her fellow townspeople. . . . I think there was a definite purpose why the Evangelist recorded that the woman left her water jar and went into the city. At the literal level, then, this shows the tremendous eagerness of the Samaritan woman, who forsakes her water jar and is more concerned for how she may benefit the multitude than for her more humble duty related to material things. For she was very benevolently moved and wished to announce the Christ to her fellow citizens by bearing witness to the one who told her "all I ever did." And she invites them to behold a man whose speech is greater than man, for his appearance to the eye was human. So must we, too, therefore, forgetting things that are more material in nature and leaving them behind, be eager to impart to others the benefit of which we have been partakers. For by recording the woman's commendation for those capable of reading with understanding, the Evangelist challenges us to this goal. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.169, 173-74.[9]

4:29 *Could He Be the Christ?*

The Work of an Evangelist. Chrysostom: As the apostles left their nets on being called, so she leaves her water jar to do the work of an evangelist by calling not one or two people, as Andrew and Philip did, but a whole city. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.1.[10]

One Need Only Taste of That Well to Feel as She Did. Chrysostom: She was not prevented by any concern for losing face from spreading around what had been said to her. For the soul, once kindled by the divine flame, does not consider glory or shame or any other earthly consideration: only the flame that consumes it. . . . She did not want them to trust only her own report but to come and make a judgment about Christ for themselves. . . . "Come, see a man, she says. She does not say, "Come and believe," but "Come and see," which is an easier matter. For she certainly knew that if they only tasted of that well, they would feel as she did. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.1.[11]

4:31 *The Disciples Urge Their Rabbi to Eat*

Diligence in Teaching the Gospel. Cyril of Alexandria: Having initiated the conversion of the Samaritans . . . Jesus focuses entirely on the salvation of those who are called and has no concern for bodily food, though wearied with his journey.[12] In this way, he encourages the teachers in the churches and persuades them to disregard all fatigue and be more zealous for those who are being saved than caring for their own bodies. For the prophet says, "Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord with slackness."[13] Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.[14]

4:32 *Food to Eat That the Disciples Did Not Know*

Jesus Replenishes Himself from the Father. Origen: And it is not out of place to say that not only do people and angels need spiritual food, but so too does the Christ of God. For, if I may put it this way, he is always replenishing himself from the Father, who alone is without need and sufficient in himself. Now the common person who is being taught receives his foods

[8]NPNF 1 7:106*. [9]FC 89:104-5**; SC 222:126-30. [10]NPNF 1 14:118**. [11]NPNF 1 14:118-19**. [12]Jn 4:6. [13]Jer 48:10. [14]LF 43:224**.

from the disciples of Jesus who are commanded to distribute food to the crowds,[15] and Jesus' disciples receive their food from Jesus himself. . . . The Son of God, however, receives his food from the Father alone, without the intervention of any other being. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.219-220.[16]

4:33 *Who Brought Food?*

The Disciples Do Not Understand. Augustine: It is no wonder that the woman did not understand what he said about the water when you consider the disciples did not understand about the food either. Tractates on the Gospel of John 15.31.[17]

4:34 *Doing the Will of God*

Christ Hungry for Our Salvation. Chrysostom: He calls the salvation of men and women his food, showing his great desire that we should be saved. His desire for our salvation is as great as our desire for food. And see how often he does not express himself directly but figuratively. This necessarily makes it difficult for his hearers to comprehend his meaning, but it also gives a greater importance to that meaning once it is understood. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.1.[18]

The Will of God Is Repentance and Forgiveness. Ambrose: The food of a priest is the remission of sins. Therefore, the Prince of priests, Christ, says, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me." What is the will of God but this: "When you turn and groan,[19] then shall you be saved"?[20] Letter 57 (to Simplicianus).[21]

One Will. Origen: It is proper food for the Son of God when he becomes a doer of the Father's will, that is, when he wills in himself what was also the Father's will, so that the will of God is in the will of the Son, and the will of the Son has become indistinguishable from the will of the Father, and there are no longer two wills but one.[22] It is because of this one will that the Son said, "I and the Father are one."[23] And because of this will, he who has seen him has seen the Son, and has seen also the one who sent him.[24] . . . Only the Son has comprehended the complete will of God and does it. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.228, 231.[25]

Being Perfected and Made Ready for Solid Food. Origen: Perhaps the Savior was sent for the following reasons. First, that he might do the will of the one who sent him, having become his worker here, too, and second, that he might perfect the work of God, so that each one who has been perfected might be made fit for solid food and be present with wisdom. "Solid food is for the perfect, the mature, who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil."[26] . . . And when each of us, a work of God, has been perfected by Jesus, he will say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As for the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."[27] Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.241-42.[28]

The Work of the Father Is Not Yet Finished. Ambrose: But as Christ is not yet made subject [to the Father], so also is the work of God not yet perfected. For the Son of God said, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work." How can anyone doubt that the subjection of the Son in me is still in the future when the work of the Father is still unfinished [in me] because I myself am not yet perfect? On the Christian Faith 5.13.169.[29]

[15]Lk 9:16. [16]FC 89:113; SC 222:148-50. [17]NPNF 1 7:107**. [18]NPNF 1 14:119**. [19]Repent. [20]Is 30:15. [21]FC 26:315*. [22]Origen's words could be construed as akin to the later teaching known as monothelitism (i.e., Christ had only one will), although that was not yet a burning issue at this stage of theological discussion. [23]Jn 10:30. [24]Jn 12:45. [25]FC 89:115-16; SC 222:154-56. [26]Heb 5:14. [27]2 Tim 4:7-8. [28]FC 89:118**; SC 222:160. See also Ambrose *On the Christian Faith* 5.13.170. [29]NPNF 2 10:305**.

The Conversion of the World. Theodore of Mopsuestia: What is this work? It is the conversion of the human race. And quite appropriately, by speaking like a human being, he said that that work was more important than any corporeal food. He also said that he did the will of him who sent him because he had been entrusted with that work. Commentary on John 2.4.34.[30]

4:35 *Fields White for Harvest*

"Lift Up Your Eyes." Origen: "Lift up your eyes" occurs in many places in Scripture when the divine Word admonishes us to exalt and lift up our thoughts, and to elevate the insight that lies below in a rather sickly condition and is stooped and completely incapable of looking up,[31] as is written for instance in Isaiah, "lift up your eyes on high and see. Who has made all these things known?"[32] . . . No one who indulges his passions and clings to the flesh with a concern for material things has observed the command that says, "Lift up your eyes." Such a person will not see the fields, even if they are "already white for harvest." Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.274, 278.[33]

The Fields of Salvation. Chrysostom: What the will of the Father is, he now proceeds to explain: "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes harvest?'" . . . He leads them, as his custom is, from low things to high. . . . Fields and harvest here express the great number of souls ready to receive the Word. The eyes are both spiritual and bodily, for they saw a great multitude of Samaritans now approaching. This expectant crowd he calls very suitably white fields. For as the corn, when it grows white, is ready for the harvest, so these were ready for salvation. But why doesn't he say this in direct language? . . . Because, by making use in this way of the objects around them, he gave greater vividness and power to his words and brought the truth home to them. He also spoke in this way so that his discourse might be more pleasant and might sink deeper into their memories. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.1-2.[34]

4:36-37 *Both Sowers and Reapers Rejoice*

Moses as Sower and Apostles as Those Who Reap. Origen: It is my opinion that in the case of every art and science of the more important subjects of investigation, the one who discovers the first principle is the sower. Others receive and elaborate on these principles. They then hand on to others of a later time what they have discovered . . . who then take this up as if it were a harvest of the full fruit of the art or science they have received that has now reached maturity. But if this is true in the case of certain arts and sciences, how much more is it evident in the case of the art of arts and the science of sciences? . . .

Consider the possibility that those who "sow" are Moses and the prophets, since they wrote "for our admonition on whom the ends of the world have come,"[35] and proclaimed the sojourn of Christ. And consider if those who "reaped" were the apostles who received the Christ and beheld the glory[36] which agreed with the intellectual seeds of the prophets about him. These were reaped by the elaboration and grasping of "the mystery that has been hidden from the ages, but that is manifested in these last times,"[37] and "in other generations was not known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets."[38]

The seed [that is being sown] in this case is the whole plan[39] related to the revelation of the mystery that has been kept silent for eternity and now has been made known through the prophetic Scriptures and the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. At that time the true light made the fields white already for harvest by shining upon them.

According to this explanation[40] then, the fields

[30]CSCO 4 3:94. [31]See Lk 13:11. [32]Is 40:26. [33]FC 89:125-26; SC 222:178-80. [34]NPNF 1 14:119**. See also Eusebius *Proof of the Gospel* 9.8 (*POG* 2:171). [35]See 1 Cor 10:11. [36]See Jn 1:14. [37]See Eph 3:9; 1 Pet 1:20. [38]Eph 3:5. [39]Gk *logos*. [40]Gk *logos*.

in which the seeds had been sown are the writings of the law and prophets that were not white to those who had not received the presence of the Word. They became such, however, to those who become disciples of the Son of God—those who obey him when he says, "Lift up your eyes and see the fields, for they are white for harvest." As genuine disciples of Jesus, therefore, let us also lift up our eyes and see the fields that have been sown by Moses and the prophets, that we may see their whiteness and how it is possible to reap their fruit to eternal life. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.302-3, 305-8.[41]

Prophets and Apostles. Chrysostom: Who is "he that sows"? Who is "he that reaps"? The prophets sowed, but they did not reap; rather, the apostles are the ones who reaped. Yet, the prophets are not deprived of the pleasure and reward of their labors on this account, but they rejoice and are glad with us, even though they do not reap with us. For harvesting is not the same kind of work as sowing. I therefore have reserved for you what involves less work and greater pleasure, that is, harvesting instead of sowing, because there is a lot more hardship and work involved in sowing. At the harvest, the return is large and the labor not so great. In fact, it is quite easy. By these arguments Jesus here desires to prove that the desire of the prophets is that all people should come to him. The law was also utilized in this, and the prophets sowed the law for this same reason so that they might produce this fruit. Jesus shows, moreover, that he sent those prophets as well, and that there was a very intimate connection between the new covenant and the old. All this he effects by this one parable. Homilies on the Gospel of John 34.2.[42]

Jesus Sows, and the Apostles Reap. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Jesus calls himself a sower because he has begun to teach and preach. He calls the apostles reapers because they have taken their start from him and have thus been able to offer men and women as fruits to God. Therefore he adds . . . "and the reaper is already receiving wages," that is, not because the impetus and start of the work comes from me or because your labor will be without reward—which is not the case—but because you will also receive your wages according to your labor. So the benefit is held in common: it is mine because I sowed, but it is also yours because you reap. You rejoice in gathering the fruits, and I rejoice in seeing the seed grow. The truth of grace is revealed more clearly in this as well because, through the seeds sown by me, such a great power has been given to you that you will be enabled to lead many to faith because of the help you derive from me. And the fact that, empowered by me, you are able to do these things again confirms the excellence of my virtue. Commentary on John 2.4.36-37.[43]

The Threshing Floor Is the Church. Cyril of Alexandria: The spiritual sowing indicates those who tilled beforehand by the voice of the prophets. The multitude of spiritual ears is those brought to the faith that is shown through Christ. But the harvest is white, in other words, already ripe for faith, and confirmed toward a godly life. But the sickle of the reaper is the glittering and sharp word of the apostle, cutting away the hearers from the worship according to the law and transferring them to the floor, that is, to the church of God. There, they are bruised and pressed by good works and shall be set forth as pure wheat worthy of the divine harvest. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.[44]

4:38 *Sent to Reap*

Jesus Cultivated the Prophets from the Beginning. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Even though he called himself the sower of the faith, the teaching of the faith nonetheless had its beginning before his coming in the flesh. It is obvious that it had already had a beginning

[41]FC 89:132-33; SC 222:198-202. [42]NPNF 1 14:120**. [43]CSCO 4 3:94. [44]LF 43:228**.

through the prophets and the righteous ones who followed them. He also clearly shows that this beginning had been given by him as well. "I sent you, he says, to reap and enjoy the labor of others." After they worked hard to enable the seed of faith to remain among men and women, you came, and from this crop you gather them and lead them to faith. I would have not invited you to reap and enjoy the work of others if that cultivation was not mine from the beginning. Some I entrusted with sowing, others with reaping. I did so according to time and the different phases of cultivation. Commentary on John 2.4.38.[45]

4:40 *The Samaritans Ask Jesus to Remain*

Jesus Remains with Those Who Ask. Origen: John has not written that the Samaritans "asked him" to enter Samaria or to enter the city but "to remain with them." . . . In what follows he does not say, "And he remained in that city two days" or "he remained in Samaria" but "he remained there," that is, with those who asked. For Jesus remains with those who ask, and especially when those who ask him come out of their city and come to Jesus, as if in imitation of Abraham when he obeyed God who said, "Go forth out of your country and from your kindred, and out of your father's house."[46] Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.345-46.[47]

4:41 *Many More Believed Because of Jesus' Word*

What Did Jesus Say to the Samaritans? Chrysostom: They acknowledge Christ not just as one of the many Christs but as *the* Savior. And yet, who did they see who had been saved at this point? They had only heard his words, and yet they spoke as though they had seen all these great and wonderful miracles. Why, then, don't the Evangelists tell us what these words were and how admirably he spoke? By not doing so, they show that they pass over many important matters, and yet, by reporting the event itself, they lead us to understand everything. For he persuaded an entire people and a whole city by his words alone! On the other hand, when the hearers are not convinced, the Evangelists are obliged to provide the words of our Lord so that the failure may be seen as owing to the indifference of the hearers, not to any defect in the preacher. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.1.[48]

4:42 *We Heard Him Ourselves*

Direct Access to the Word. Origen: The Samaritans renounce their faith that was based on the speech of the woman when they discover that hearing the Savior himself is better than that faith, so that they, too, know "that this is truly the Savior of the world." It is better indeed to become an eyewitness of the Word and to hear him [directly]. . . . And so, there is nothing astonishing in the fact that some are said to walk by faith and not by sight, while others are said to walk by sight, which is greater than walking by faith. . . . Heracleon says, "People believe in the Savior first by being led by people. But whenever they read his words, they no longer believe because of human testimony alone, but because of the truth itself." Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.353, 362-63.[49]

The People Dismiss Their First Instructor for the Real Thing. Chrysostom: "And they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.'" The pupils had gone beyond their first instructor . . . Notice how soon they arrived at the understanding that he had come for the deliverance of the whole world and could not therefore confine his purposes to the Jews but must sow the Word everywhere. . . . Their saying too, "The Savior of the world," implies that they looked on this world as misera-

[45]CSCO 4 3:95. [46]Gen 12:1. [47]FC 89:142-43; SC 222:224. [48]NPNF 1 14:123**. [49]FC 89:144, 146; SC 222:228, 234.

ble and lost. They saw that whereas prophets and angels had come to save it, this was the only real Savior, the author not only of temporal but eternal salvation. . . . And notice how the woman had spoken doubtfully, "Is not this the Christ?" But they do not say, "We suspect" but "We know" that this is indeed the Savior of the world. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.1.[50]

[50]NPNF 1 14:122-23**.

THE HEALING OF THE OFFICIAL'S SON: THE SECOND SIGN JOHN 4:43-54

Overview: After two days in Samaria, the Samaritans believe; after many days in Galilee, Jesus' home, the Galileans still need to be convinced (Augustine). He journeys to Galilee and Cana but avoids Capernaum, where he had previously spent much time, because a prophet has no honor in his own country since familiarity usually breeds contempt (Chrysostom). It seems that prophets are only honored when they are dead (Origen). Jesus is welcomed with honor in Galilee (Theodore), perhaps, because some of them had been in Jerusalem and witnessed Jesus' cleansing of the temple (Origen). The despised Samaritans and now the Galileans are the ones who welcome Jesus. Christ returns to Cana, rather than his own hometown, either to confirm by his presence the faith this miracle had produced (Chrysostom), or to make another attempt at their conversion, since after the first miracle only his disciples who were with him believed (Augustine). The nobleman who meets him there may have been an officer of Herod or of Caesar's household who was commissioned in Judea (Origen). He may also have been royalty or

some other high rank, but he most likely is not the same person as the centurion identified in Matthew. Although Jesus rebukes the nobleman, he consents to perform the miracle—something he often did for the unbelieving, while using the tool of teaching for believers. We should not sit around, however, waiting for miracles that may or may not happen, but we should give thanks and glorify God even when healing does not take place (Chrysostom).

One might question why a man who seems to approach Jesus in good faith receives such harsh words, but his was a weak faith that needed to see Christ personally present in order to effect the miracle (Gregory the Great). We should not be too harsh in our judgment of this father, however, who, as fathers often are, was carried away by his love for his son (Chrysostom). Jesus does indeed help the man, but not because he was impressed with his wealth (Gregory the Great). He also helped this person who, despite the lack of understanding of what was needed, still believed as he went on his way (Cyril, Theodore). The servants who met him, an act that demonstrates his high rank (Origen), tell him the details of the healing, which makes it obvious that it must have been Christ's doing (Chrysostom). In the end, both father and son are healed (Cyril of Alexandria).

John records this as the second sign of Jesus, but the phrase itself is ambiguous and most likely refers to the fact that there were two signs performed in Galilee, the second occurring after he came from Judea to Galilee (Origen).

4:43 *Jesus Left Samaria and Went to Galilee*

The Results of Two Days in Samaria versus Galilee. Augustine: Jesus left for Galilee, where he grew up. Why then does the Evangelist add immediately, "For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country"? It was not because he had no honor in Samaria. Samaria, after all, was not his own country; Galilee was. . . . But it would have seemed that he had testified more to the truth of the Evangelist's statement if he had remained in Samaria and stayed away from Galilee. . . . This is not the case, however. He stayed two days in Samaria, and the Samaritans believed in him; he stayed many more days in Galilee, and the Galileans did not believe in him. Tractates on the Gospel of John 16.1, 3.[1]

4:44 *A Prophet Has No Honor in His Own Country*

Familiarity Breeds Contempt. Chrysostom: We read below that his country was, I suppose, Capernaum. Now, to demonstrate how he received no honor there, listen to what he says: "And you, Capernaum, which are exalted to heaven, shall be brought down to hell."[2] He calls Capernaum his own country because he lived there most of the time and taught there. But someone might ask, "Don't we usually see many admired among their own people?" This may be so, but we should not make such judgments on the basis of a few instances, because it is also true that while some have been honored in their own country, many more have been honored outside it, since familiarity generally breeds contempt. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.2.[3]

Prophets Honored Only When Dead. Origen: The country of the prophets, of course, was in Judea, and it is clear that they had had no honor among the Jews since they were stoned, sawn in two, tried and put to death by the sword. Because they were dishonored, they went about in sheepskins and goat skins, being in need, afflicted and ill-treated.[4]. . . The truth of the Savior's statement is amazing. It is applicable not only to the holy prophets, who were dishonored by their fellow countrymen, and to our Lord himself, but also to those who have busied themselves in any field of learning and have been despised by their fellow citizens with the result that some of them, too, have been executed. . . . What has happened in the case of the prophets is most para-

[1]NPNF 1 7:108**. [2]Mt 11:23. [3]NPNF 1 14:123**. [4]See Heb 11:37.

doxical indeed. While alive their fellow citizens dishonored them, but dead they respect them by building and adorning their tombs.[5] Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.372, 376, 378.[6]

4:45 *The Galileans Welcomed Jesus*

Jesus Is Received with Honor in Galilee. Theodore of Mopsuestia: After he had spent two days there, he continued his journey into Galilee, as he had planned. Not only did he see this as an opportunity, but he also often said that a prophet has no honor in his homeland. He called Judea his homeland, which he had left for this very reason, that is, because obviously the Jews out of great envy wanted to persecute him in various ways. All that [the Evangelist] said about the Samaritans was clearly inserted into the plot of his narrative. Among other things, Samaria was not the homeland of the Messiah. Also, the words "has no honor" could not refer to the Samaritans because they believed in him and received him with great honor. However, the Galileans, the Evangelist says, received him with honor as well, since they knew and had seen those things done by him in Jerusalem. Commentary on John 2.4.43-45.[7]

Cleansing the Temple Prepared the Galileans to Receive Jesus. Origen: It is possible . . . that a Galilean happened to be in Jerusalem, where the temple of God is located, to celebrate the festival and saw everything that Jesus did there. He may have especially seen how he cast out all those selling cattle, sheep and doves, along with the sheep, the cattle, and the rest, with the scourge he made from cords.[8] For the feast in Jerusalem marks the beginning of the Galileans' reception of the Son of God when he came to them. Otherwise, if they had not seen his deeds at the feast, they would not have received him. He also would not have visited them so eagerly, having left those who asked him "to remain with them,"[9] if the Galileans had not been previously prepared to receive him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.387-88.[10]

The Faith of the Samaritans and the Galileans. Chrysostom: Do you see that the people who have the worst things spoken about them are the ones found most often coming to him? For one said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"[11] Another said, "Search and look, for out of Galilee arises no prophet."[12] They said these things as an insult to him, because many people thought he was from Nazareth. They also reproached him with being a Samaritan; "You are a Samaritan," said one, "and have a devil."[13] Yet behold, both Samaritans and Galileans believe, to the shame of the Jews, and Samaritans are found better than Galileans, for the first received him through the words of the woman, the second received him when they had seen the miracles that he did. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.2.[14]

4:46 *Jesus Went Again to Cana*

Christ's Presence Confirms the Earlier Miracle. Chrysostom: On a former occasion our Lord attended a marriage in Cana of Galilee. Now he goes there to convert the people and confirm by his presence the faith that his miracle had produced. He leaves his own country of Capernaum and goes to Cana as a self-invited guest this time, showing his preference for Cana as he tries to draw them closer to him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.2.[15]

A Second Visit to Convert Cana. Augustine: There [i.e., Cana], as John himself writes, "his disciples believed on him." Though the house was crowded with guests, the only persons who believed in consequence of this great miracle[16] were his disciples. He therefore visits the city

[5]See Mt 23:29. [6]FC 89:148-49; SC 222:238-42. [7]CSCO 4 3:96. [8]See Jn 2:15. [9]See Jn 4:40. [10]FC 89:151; SC 222:246-48. [11]Jn 1:46. [12]Jn 7:52. [13]Jn 8:48. [14]NPNF 1 14:123**. But see Augustine, who is not as positive about the Galilean reception. [15]NPNF 1 14:123**. [16]Changing water into wine.

again [in order to try a second time to convert them]. Tractates on the Gospel of John 16.3.[17]

An Officer of Herod's? Origen: A guileless person will think that this royal officer was King Herod's man; another, equally simple, will say that he was of Caesar's household, performing some duty concerning Judea at the time. He is clearly not found to be a Jew. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.395.[18]

Matthew's Centurion? Chrysostom: This person certainly was of royal lineage or possessed some dignity from his office, which is why the title "noble" was attached to it. Some think that he is the same centurion who is mentioned in Matthew.[19] But it is clear that he is a different person from the fact that when Christ wanted to come to the centurion's house in Matthew, the centurion there did not entreat him. . . . The official here in John brought Christ to his house, although he had received no promise of a cure. . . . And the centurion in Matthew met Jesus on his way from the mountain to Capernaum, whereas the official in John came to Jesus in Cana. Notice also that the Matthaean centurion's servant was laid up with the palsy. The Johannine official's son had a fever. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.2.[20]

4:48 *Signs and Wonders*

Miracles Are for the Unbelieving. Chrysostom: The fact that he came and asked for help was a mark of faith. He also believed Jesus' words when he told him, "Go, your son lives," since he indeed did go. Then why does he say this here? Is he contrasting him with the Samaritans, who believed without signs, or is he rebuking Capernaum in the person of this centurion who was from there? . . . But notice also how the centurion only believes when his servants inform him, not when Christ spoke to him. And so Jesus rebukes the state of mind the man had when he first came to him and spoke to him. In this way he also draws him along in his faith since he had not believed as strongly before the miracle took place. . . . The man says, "Sir, come down, or my child will die." It is as if he were saying that Jesus could not raise his son after death, as though Jesus did not already know what state the child was in. It is for this reason that Christ rebukes him and touches his conscience, in order to show that his miracles were done principally for the sake of the soul. For here he heals the father who was sick in mind no less than the son in order to persuade us to listen to him, not because of his miracles but because of his teaching. Miracles are not for the faithful but for the unbelieving and for people who are not as knowledgeable about the faith. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.2.[21]

Do Not Wait for Miracles. Chrysostom: So what are we taught by these things? We are taught not to wait for miracles or to seek promises of the power of God. I see a lot of people, even now, who become more pious when, during the sufferings of a child or the sickness of a wife, they see any sign of relief. And yet, even if their child or wife did not obtain that relief, they still should persist in giving thanks and in glorifying God. Because right-minded servants and those who love their Master as they ought should run to him not only when they are pardoned but also when chastised. For this too also shows the tender care of God, since "those whom the Lord loves he also chastens."[22] Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.3.[23]

Why Such Harsh Words? Gregory the Great: I see only one thing that I need to explain to you: why the one who had come for a cure heard the words "Unless you see signs and portents, you do not believe." The one who was seeking a cure for his son surely believed; he would not be seeking a cure from one he did not believe could do it.

[17]NPNF 1 7:108**. [18]FC 89:153**; SC 222:252. [19]Mt 8:5-15. [20]NPNF 1 14:123-24**. [21]NPNF 1 14:124**. [22]Heb 12:6. [23]NPNF 1 14:125**.

Why, then, did he hear the words "Unless you see signs and portents, you do not believe," when he believed before he saw the sign? But recall what he was asking, and you will see that his faith was in doubt. He asked Jesus earnestly to come down and heal his son. He was asking for the physical presence of the Lord, who is nowhere absent in his spirit. He had little faith in one he thought could not heal unless he was physically present. If he had believed completely, he would have known that there was no place where God was not present. He was considerably distrustful, then, since it was not the Lord's greatness he esteemed but his physical presence. He sought a cure for his son even though his faith was in doubt, since he believed that the one he had approached had the power to cure, and yet he thought he was not with his dying son. But the Lord whom he asked to come revealed that he was not absent from the place he was invited to. He who created everything by his will performed the cure by his command alone. Forty Gospel Homilies 28.[24]

4:49 *Come Down, or My Child Will Die*

Fathers Often Carried Away by Their Love. Chrysostom: Christ rebukes the state of mind in which the father had come to him and spoken to him as he did because, before the miracle, the father's faith was not that strong. The fact that he came and entreated Jesus was nothing special, for parents often are so carried away by their affection that they consult not only those physicians they depend on, but even people they do not depend on at all. This is because they do not want to leave any possibility unexplored. . . . But if he had any strong reliance on Christ, he would not have hesitated to go to Jesus in Judea when his child was at the point of death. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.2.[25]

4:50 *Your Son Lives*

Wealth Neither Impressed Nor Deterred Jesus. Gregory the Great: In this matter we must pay careful attention to what we have learned from the testimony of another Evangelist. A centurion came to the Lord saying, "Sir, my servant is lying at home paralyzed and in great pain." Jesus immediately answered him, "I myself will come and heal him."[26] Why is it that when the ruler asked him to come to his son, he refused to go there in person, but he promised to go in person to the servant, when the centurion had not asked him to do so? He did not condescend to be physically present to the ruler's son but did hurry to the side of the centurion's servant.

Why was this, except to check our pride? We do not respect in people their nature, made in God's image, but their riches and reputation. When we consider what is important about them we scarcely regard what they are inwardly. We pay attention to what is physically displeasing about them and neglect to consider what they are. Our Redeemer, to show us that the things human beings regard highly are displeasing to the saints and that we are not to be displeased by what humans consider displeasing, refused to go to the ruler's son but was ready to go to the centurion's servant. . . .

You see that one came from heaven who was not reluctant to hurry to a servant on earth, and yet we who are of the earth refuse to be humbled on earth. Forty Gospel Homilies 28.[27]

Christ Does Not Reject Us in Our Lack of Understanding. Cyril of Alexandria: The nobleman believed that Jesus needed to come [to his son to heal him]. But Christ does not reject our lack of apprehension; rather, as God, he helps even the stumbling. What the man then should have been admired for doing is what Jesus teaches him even when he does not end up doing it. In this way Jesus is revealed both as the teacher of the most lovely things and the giver of good things in prayer. For, in "Go your way," there is faith. In "your son lives" there is the fulfillment of his longings, granted with both a generosity and

[24]CS 123:221-22. [25]NPNF 1 14:124**. [26]Mt 8:6-7. [27]CS 123:222-23.

an authority befitting to God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.[28]

The Nobleman's Faith Still Imperfect. Theodore of Mopsuestia: By writing here "believed," the Evangelist does not intend that he believed completely and perfectly, but means that he accepted the word without hesitation and hoped for something excellent from [Jesus]. . . . The events that follow show clearly that the royal official had come to Christ with an imperfect faith. When he was going down, his slaves met him and reported to him his son's recovery. He did not come back to give thanks for the miracle but asked at what time the child had recovered. When he had ascertained that it was the same hour in which the Lord had promised him the healing of the child, "Then he himself believed, along with his whole household." Commentary on John 2.4.46-48.[29]

4:51 *Good News of the Son's Healing*

Servants Meeting Him Implies High Rank. Origen: His dignity appears in the fact that his servants have already come to meet him while he is going down, to tell him that his child lives, for "servants" are mentioned in the plural. Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.396.[30]

The Miracle Is Obviously Christ's Doing. Chrysostom: Do you see how obvious the miracle was? It was not in a simple or ordinary way that the child was freed from danger, but all at once. In this way, what took place was seen to be Christ's doing and not the work of nature. For when he had reached the very gates of death—as his father demonstrated by saying, "Come down before my child dies"—he was all at once freed from the disease. This fact roused the servants as well, for they came to meet him not only perhaps to announce what had happened but also to prevent Christ from coming since he was no longer needed. Homilies on the Gospel of John 35.3.[31]

Two Are Healed. Cyril of Alexandria: The one command of the Savior heals two souls. In the official, the Savior's command brings about unexpected faith even as it also rescues the child from bodily death. It is difficult to say which one is healed first. Both, I suppose, are healed simultaneously. The disease left at the command of the Savior. The official's servants meet him and tell him of the healing of the child. This shows at the same time the swiftness of the divine commands and how wisely Christ ordered all of this. They speedily confirmed the hope of their master, who was weak in faith. . . . When the official learned that the sick child's recovery coincided exactly with Jesus' command, he is saved with "his whole house." He attributes the power of the miracle to the Savior Christ, and he is brought to a firmer faith. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.[32]

4:54 *The Second Sign Jesus Did*

Ambiguous Saying. Origen: The saying is ambiguous. On the one hand it means something like this: In coming from Judea into Galilee Jesus has performed two signs. The second sign is the one concerning the royal official's son. On the other hand it could mean something like this: While there are two signs that Jesus performed in Galilee, he did the second after he came from Judea to Galilee. The latter is the meaning to be accepted as correct. For Jesus has not performed the first sign since he came from Judea into Galilee (the first sign changing of the water into wine), which occurred the day after Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, asked where Jesus was staying and remained with the Lord about the tenth hour of the day.[33] For it is written, "On the following day he wished to depart into Galilee, and he found Philip."[34] Commentary on the Gospel of John 13.434-35.[35]

[28]LF 43:233-34**. [29]CSCO 4 3:97. [30]FC 89:153-54*; SC 222:252. [31]NPNF 1 14:125**. [32]LF 43:234**. [33]Jn 1:38-40. [34]Jn 1:43. [35]FC 89:160-61; SC 222:270.

Healing at the Pool of Bethesda: The Third Sign John 5:1-9

Overview: After the miracle in Galilee, Jesus returns to Jerusalem during the feast of Passover (Irenaeus), at a time when many of the people would be gathered together and he would be able to reach a larger group (Theodore). There was a pool there called Bethesda, with five porticoes, which suggest the five books of Moses (Augustine). The priests washed the animals that were to be sacrificed there, and so the people looked for bodily healing to occur at this place when the waters were stirred (Theodore). But water can also heal diseases of the soul as it does in baptism (Chrysostom). The waters of baptism are much more abundant than the waters at this pool (Chromatius). For those at the pool, an angel descended; for us, the Spirit descends to consecrate the waters for healing (Ambrose).

The perseverance of this thirty-eight-year paralytic serves as an example to those who give in too easily when their prayers are not immediately answered (Chrysostom). Jesus' question to the man shows Jesus is not like a faith healer who seeks to draw attention to himself; he wants to heal the man as well as expose the cruelty of those around him (Amphilochius). His question conveys the fact that he possesses the power at hand to heal him (Cyril of Alexandria). Despite the immense suffering this person must have gone through, there is no complaint from him; instead there is hope (Chrysostom). Jesus heals him with three distinct commands: "Rise," which confers the cure (Augustine), "take up your bed," and "walk," which shows the completeness of the cure (Ephrem). He also calls on you to take up your beds, that is, to govern your body, which formerly carried you, and walk in every good work (Caesarius). Or it is as if he is saying: when you were sick, your neighbor carried you; now that you have been healed, carry your neighbor (Augustine).

5:1 *Jesus Went to Jerusalem for the Passover*

Christ Always Went to Jerusalem for Passover. Irenaeus: One can examine the Gospels to ascertain how often after his baptism the Lord went up, at the time of the Passover, to Jerusalem, in accordance with what was the practice of the Jews from every land, and every year, that they should assemble at this period in Jeru-

salem and there celebrate the feast of the Passover. First of all, after he had made the water wine at Cana of Galilee, he went up to the festival day of the Passover. . . . Afterwards he went up, the second time, to observe the festival day of the Passover[1] in Jerusalem. On this occasion he cured the paralytic man who had lain beside the pool thirty-eight years. . . . Then, when he had raised Lazarus from the dead and plots were formed against him by the Pharisees, he withdrew to a city called Ephraim. And from that place, as it is written, "He came to Bethany six days before the Passover,"[2] and going up from Bethany to Jerusalem, he there ate the Passover and suffered on the day following. Now, that these three occasions of the Passover are not included within one year, every person whatever must acknowledge. Against Heresies 2.22.3.[3]

Opportunities for Revelation. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He chose the time when everybody gathered to offer his help to everyone. Therefore he went to Jerusalem at that time. He did not think it was necessary to travel around and go to every place where people were ill, so that it might not appear that he was looking for fame. Instead he healed one only and through him he revealed himself to many. Commentary on John 2.5.1.[4]

5:2 *A Pool with Five Porticoes*

Agitated by Christ. Augustine: That pool and that water, in my opinion, signified the people of the Jews. For the Apocalypse of John clearly indicates to us that peoples are suggested by the name of waters. When many waters were shown to him and he asked what they were, he received the answer that they were peoples.[5] Therefore that water, that is, that people was shut in by the five books of Moses as by five porticoes.

But those books brought forth sick people; they did not heal. For the law convicted sinners; it did not absolve them. . . . What happened, then, that they, who could not be healed in the porticoes, were healed in that agitated water? For, suddenly, the water was seen to be agitated, but he by whom it was agitated was not seen. You may believe that this used to happen by an angel's power[6] but still not without some significant symbolic meaning. After the agitation of the water, the one who was able to thrust himself in, and he alone, was healed. Whoever thrust himself in after him did so without effect.

What, then, does this mean, except that Christ came to the Jewish people, and by doing great things, by teaching useful things, he agitated sinners, agitating the water by his presence and stirring it up in preparation for his passion? But he agitated while being hidden. "For if they had known, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory."[7] Therefore to descend into the agitated water is to believe humbly in the Lord's passion. Tractates on the Gospel of John 17.2.1-3.3.[8]

5:3 *A Multitude of Invalids*

Rare Healings Magnify the Miracle. Theodore of Mopsuestia: A great crowd of ill people, struck with different infirmities, had gathered here hoping to be healed as if these waters might effect something because the entrails of sheep offered as victims to God [for the temple] were washed in them. And God also

[1]It is well known that to fix what is meant by the "feast" referred to in this passage of John is one of the most difficult points in New Testament criticism. Some modern scholars think that the feast of Purim is intended by the Evangelist. But, on the whole, the current of opinion that has always prevailed in the church has been in favor of the statement here made by Irenaeus, although Chrysostom thought it was the feast of Pentecost (see *Homily on John* 36.1), as did Ammonius (*Fragments on John* 155). Christ would therefore be present at four Passovers after his baptism—Jn 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 13:1—which implies at least a three year ministry. It is from John that we learn of this three year ministry, not the Synoptic Gospels. [2]Jn 11:54; 12:1. [3]ANF 1:390-91*. [4]CSCO 4 3:98. [5]See Rev 17:15; Augustine *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 6.11. [6]Some manuscripts of John's Gospel have an additional verse 4, which relates how an angel came down and stirred up the water of the pool. This verse is not found in the earliest manuscripts and papyri. Augustine's words here do not require that he has this verse in mind but strongly suggest it. [7]See 1 Cor 2:8. [8]FC 79:109-11*; CCL 36:170-71.

supported this belief by causing the waters to move sometimes. Since they believed that the waters were moved by divine power, they obtained the grace of healing after they had come down [into the water]. It was not that many people were healed at the same time but that the one who came down first obtained the aid afforded by grace. [This happened] in order that the facility of the healing might not diminish the effect of the miracle. And so, because they waited with great attention and anticipation for the movement of the waters, once they recovered their health, they might have a better memory of their healing. Even though many lay ill there, he did not heal all of them. But, in order to show his power, he chose one affected with a very serious infirmity and who was hopeless already about his recovery. Commentary on John 2.5.2-5.[9]

The Cure of Baptism Foreshadowed. Chrysostom: What kind of a cure is this? What mystery does it signify to us? . . . What is it that is shown in outline? A baptism was about to be given that possessed much power. It was the greatest of gifts, a baptism purging all sins and making people alive instead of dead. These things then are foreshown as in a picture by the pool. . . . And this miracle was done so that those [at the pool] who had learned over and over for such a long time how it is possible to heal the diseases of the body by water might more easily believe that water can also heal the diseases of the soul. Homilies on the Gospel of John 36.1.[10]

5:4 *An Angel of the Lord Stirred the Waters*[11]

The Water at the Pool and the Water of Baptism. Chromatius of Aquileia: That water [at the pool of Bethesda] was moved once a year; this water of the church's baptism is always ready to be moved. That water was moved only in one place; this water is moved throughout the entire world. Then an angel descended; now it is the Holy Spirit. Then it was the grace of the angel; now it is the mystery of the Trinity. That water cured only once in a year; this water saves people every day. That water healed the body; this water heals both body and soul. That water healed a person's health; this heals from sin. There, the body was only healed of its infirmities; here, body and soul are freed from sin. There, many who were weary lay sick at that water because it only cured one person a year. No one will be left lying sick here where the waters of baptism are, if they resolve to come and be healed. Sermon 14.[12]

For Them an Angel Descended, for You the Holy Spirit. Ambrose: No one was healed before the angel had descended. Because of those who did not believe, the water was troubled as a sign that the angel had descended. They had a sign, you have faith; for them an angel descended, for you the Holy Spirit; for them the creation was troubled, for you Christ himself, the Lord of creation, worked. Then, one was healed, now all are made whole. . . . For that pool was as a type so that you might believe that the power of God descends upon this font. On the Mysteries 4.22-23.[13]

The Angel Declared the Descent of the Holy Spirit. Ambrose: What did the angel declare in this type but the descent of the Holy Spirit, which was to come to pass in our day and should consecrate the waters when invoked by the prayers of the priest? That angel, then, was a herald of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as by means of the grace of the Spirit medicine was to be applied to our infirmities of soul and mind. The Spirit, then, has the same ministers as God the Father and Christ. He fills all things, possesses all things, works all and in all in the same manner as God the Father and the Son work. On the Holy Spirit 1.7.88.[14]

---

[9]CSCO 4 3:98-99. [10]NPNF 1 14:126*. [11]This verse is omitted in some manuscripts. See footnote 6 above. [12]CCL 9A:62. See also Tertullian *On Baptism* 5 (ANF 3:671-72). [13]NPNF 2 10:320*; CSEL 73:97. [14]NPNF 2 10:105; CSEL 79:52.

5:5 *Ill for Thirty-eight Years*

The Perseverance of the Paralytic. Chrysostom: The perseverance of the paralytic was astonishing. He was thirty-eight years old, and each year he hoped to be freed from his disease. He lay there waiting, never giving up. If he had not persevered as much as he did, wouldn't his future prospects, let alone the past, have been enough to discourage him from staying around that place? Consider how alert the other sick people there would be, since no one knew for sure when the waters would be troubled. The lame and the limping could observe it, but how would a blind man?[15] Maybe he learned it from the clamor that arose. Let us be ashamed then, beloved, let us be ashamed and groan over our excessive laziness. That man had been waiting thirty-eight years without obtaining what he desired, and he still did not withdraw. And he failed, not through any carelessness of his own but through being oppressed and suffering violence from others. And still he did not give up. We . . . might persist in prayer for something for ten days or so, and if we have not obtained it, we are too lazy afterwards to employ the same energy [as he did]. And yet, we will wait forever on our fellow human beings, fighting and enduring hardships, performing menial labor, all for the chance of something that in the end fails to meet our expectations. But when it comes to our Master, from whom we are sure to obtain a reward greater than our labors . . . we exercise no such diligence in waiting on him. . . . For even if we receive nothing from him, isn't the very fact that we are able to converse with him continually the cause of ten thousand blessings? Homilies on the Gospel of John 36.1-2.[16]

5:6 *Do You Want to Be Healed?*

Jesus' Modesty and the City's Callousness. Amphilochius of Iconium: Jesus asked, "Do you want to be made whole?" See his modesty here. He does not say, "Do you desire that *I* heal you," for he did not want to make himself appear as someone great by making an announcement, as it were, of his miracles. And the [lame] man says, "I desire," but "I do not have a man" [to help me]; for where there is no love, there is not even one person [to offer help]. And so, I also ask for this reason, [Jesus says]: not only so that you should know of my plan to make whole those who are sick, but also so that you might see the cruelty of those of the city who were well, because not only did no one give their hand to help you to the streams but they even treated you like an enemy when you asked [for help]. Oration 9.[17]

Jesus' Question Conveys the Power to Heal. Cyril of Alexandria: There is clear evidence of the great goodness of Christ in that he does not wait for entreaties from the sick but anticipates their request with his own loving kindness. See how he runs to the one who is lying down and how compassionate he is to one who was sick with no one to comfort him. But the inquiry as to whether he would like to be relieved from his infirmity was not that of one asking out of ignorance what was obvious, but of one stirring up an increased desire and diligent entreaty. The question as to whether he wanted to obtain what he longed for is huge. It has the kind of force and expression that conveys that Jesus has the power to give and is now ready to do so, only waiting for the request of the one who will receive this grace. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.[18]

5:7 *No One to Help*

Christ Provides a Sympathetic Ear, and More. Chrysostom: What can be more pitiable than these words? What more sad than these circumstances? Do you see a heart crushed through an extended illness? Do you see all the pain and

[15]Chrysostom seems to conflate maladies here. [16]NPNF 1 14:126-27**. [17]TLG 2112.10, 43-50. [18]LF 43:237**.

violence he suffered subdued? He utters no blasphemy. He does not curse the day of his birth or get angry at the question, "Will you be healed?" . . . Instead, he replies gently and with great mildness, "Yes, Lord." And yet, he did not know who it was that asked him, let alone that he would heal him. Rather, he still mildly relates all the circumstances, asking for nothing further as though he were speaking to a physician and merely wanted to tell the story of his sufferings. Perhaps he hoped that Christ might be of some use to him in putting him into the water and hoped to stir up some sympathy with his words.

Some are of the opinion that this is the same incident that Matthew records of the one who was "lying on a bed."[19] But he is not since . . . . that paralytic man had many to wait upon and carry him, whereas this man had not a single one. . . . The places too were different: one was cured in a house, the other by the pool. Homilies on the Gospel of John 37.1-2.[20]

5:8 *Rise, Take Up Your Bed, and Walk*

"Rise" Confers the Cure. Augustine: There are three distinct commands. "Rise, take up your bed, and walk." "Rise," however, is not a command but the conferring of the cure. Two commands were given upon his cure: "take up your bed, and walk." Tractates on the Gospel of John 17.7.[21]

The Completeness of the Cure. Ephrem the Syrian: Was it not enough to say,"Rise up and go"? For was it not a miracle that the one who could not turn about on his bed could rise up easily and go? Yet to show that he had given him a full healing, he also made him carry his bed—and not like the sick who return [to health] little by little. [Our Lord said],"Take up your bed and go." And even if he remained silent, his bed would cry out. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 13.2.[22]

Take Up Your Bed and Govern Your Life. Caesarius of Arles: What does this mean, "take up your pallet" except carry and govern your body? Conduct that which carried you. For when you were under the dominion of sin your flesh first carried you to evil, but now since grace is in control you conduct and direct your body to what is good. In the wrong and wicked order your flesh was first in control and the soul served. But now through the mercy of Christ the soul holds sway and the flesh is subject to it in servitude. "Rise, take up your pallet, and go into your house." When you were thrown out of your house, that is, out of the land of paradise at the intervention of sin, your flesh hurled you down into the world. But now through the gift of divine mercy take up your pallet, and in every good work govern your little body and return to your house, that is, return to eternal life. . . . From it we were thrown into the exile of this world. Therefore, when you hear it said to the paralytic, "take up your pallet, and go into your house," believe that it is said to you: govern your flesh in all chastity and return to paradise, as if to your own home and your original country. Sermon 171.1.[23]

5:9 *He Took Up His Bed and Walked*

Itinerary of Love. Augustine: What significance is there, then, in the bed, I ask you? What, except that that sick man was carried on the bed, but when healed, he carries the bed? What was said by the apostle? "Bear your burdens, each for the other, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ."[24] Now the law of Christ is love, and love is not fulfilled unless we bear our burdens, each for the other. "Bearing with one another," he says, "in love, eager to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."[25] When you were sick, your neighbor was carrying you. You have been healed; carry your neighbor. So you will fulfill, O man, what was lacking to you.

"Take up," therefore, "your bed." But when you have taken it up, do not stay; "walk." In lov-

[19]Mt 9:2. [20]NPNF 1 14:128**. [21]NPNF 1 7:113**. [22]CB709:100. [23]FC 47:422-23*. [24]See Gal 6:2. [25]See Eph 4:2-3.

ing your neighbor, in being concerned about your neighbor, you are taking a trip. Where are you taking a trip to except to the Lord God, to him whom we ought to love with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind? For, we have not yet reached the Lord, but we have our neighbor with us. Therefore carry him with whom you are walking that you may reach him with whom you long to stay. Therefore "take up your bed, and walk." Tractates on the Gospel of John 17.9.2-3.[26]

[26]FC 79:117-18*.

HEALING ON THE SABBATH JOHN 5:10-18

Overview: The Lord heals the man and then enjoins him to break the sabbath law (Cyril of Alexandria). The Jewish leaders do not charge Jesus with breaking the law in healing; rather, they charge the one healed with doing the work of carrying his bed (Augustine). The paralytic could have answered their charges deceptively by concealing the cure and remaining out of trouble, but instead he decides to make a bold confession of the healing (Chrysostom). Jesus did not remain after the healing, however, so the man was unsure of his healer's identity (Theodore). Jesus had withdrawn, leaving the best testimony to the witnesses among them to testify on his behalf (Chrysostom). In the grand scheme of things, the healing was not a great miracle, since he left the rest of those at the pool unhealed, but Jesus' larger concern was for the cure of the soul (Augustine). On further questioning, the former paralytic implicates Jesus as the one who healed him, which helps explain in part why Jesus gives him a stern warning (Theodore). Another explanation, however, may be that Christ does not find fault with the man's past sins but rather sought to warn him, and us, against future sins (Chrysostom), since we have been healed for a new life with God and should seek to remain pure (Gregory of Nazianzus).

The Jewish elders blame Christ for healing on the sabbath, but even they performed acts of healing on the sabbath when they circumcised a man, and yet they did not condemn themselves

(Irenaeus). Jesus responds to their accusation by citing divine precedent in working on the sabbath and by asserting that he is doing his Father's work as his Father works in him (Hilary) and through him, since they are of one and the same essence (Athanasius). By his actions and through his words, Christ was establishing himself as having equal authority with the Father (Augustine, Theodore). When Jesus says the Father is still working, this does not imply that he is still doing the work of creation from which he rested in Genesis. In fact, the Sabbath rest there pointed towards Christ's Sabbath rest in the tomb. The Father is still working with and in his creation as he preserves and extends that creation which otherwise would cease to exist without his providential hand. And so, the Jews should not be surprised that Jesus works on the sabbath since, if the Father has continued to work by upholding his creation, the Son also continues to work in upholding creation, just as he had also been working at the beginning of creation with his Father (Augustine).

The Jews further note that he not only called God his Father but his own Father, which also made himself equal to the Father (Theodore). As what might be termed hostile witnesses, they understood that Jesus was claiming divine prerogative in breaking the sabbath (Ambrose), which no one would do unless he were truly equal to the one who had established the sabbath law (Chrysostom). In thinking that Jesus asserted equality with the Father, they understood something the Arians did not (Augustine). Still, some may try to get around this assertion of Jesus' equality with the Father by saying this was only the mistaken perception of the Jews; however, the facts of what he did, coupled with their reaction, establish the claim that he was indeed equal with God. Otherwise, the Evangelist would have corrected their perception in the narrative, as he did elsewhere (Chrysostom). But they reacted as they did because they only saw the flesh and not the Word (Augustine).

5:10 *Unlawful to Carry a Burden on the Sabbath*

Sabbath Laws No Longer in Effect. Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus does not pray to relieve the patient's sickness in case he [Jesus] should seem to be like one of the holy prophets. Rather, as the Lord of powers, he commands with authority that it be so. He tells him to go home rejoicing, to take his bed on his shoulders, to be a memento to those who would see the might of the one who had healed him. And so the man does as he is asked and by obedience and faith gains the threefold longed for grace. . . . Christ heals the man on the sabbath, and when healed immediately enjoins him to break through the custom of the law. He induces him to walk on the sabbath,[1] and this while carrying his bed, although God clearly cries aloud by one of the holy prophets, "Neither carry a burden out of your house on the sabbath day."[2] And no one, I suppose, who is sober-minded would say the man was then a despiser or unruly in the face of the divine commands. They would instead see that, as in a type, Christ was making known to the Jews that they should be healed by obedience and faith in the last times of the world (for this is what I think "the sabbath" signifies, being the last day of the week). But once they have received healing through faith and are remodeled into a new life, it was necessary that the old letter of the law should become of no effect and that the typical worship in shadows and empty Jewish customs should be rejected. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.5.[3]

Carrying, Not Healing, Is the Problem. Augustine: They did not charge our Lord with healing on the sabbath since he would have replied that if an ox or an ass of theirs had fallen into a pit, would they not have taken it out on the sabbath day. Rather, they addressed the man as he was carrying his bed, as if to say: Even if the

[1]See Jer 17:22. [2]Jer 17:22. [3]LF 43:238-39**.

healing could not be delayed, why command the work? . . . He shields himself under the authority of his healer: The one who made me whole is the one who said to me, "Take up your bed, and walk," meaning: Why should I not receive a command if I also received a cure from him? Tractates on the Gospel of John 17.10.[4]

5:11 *Take Up Your Bed and Walk*

A Bold Confession of Cure. Chrysostom: Had he been inclined to deception, he might have said, "I am not doing this on my own but at the request of another. If it is a crime, accuse the one who commanded it, and I will lay down my bed." In this way, he would have concealed his cure, knowing, as he did, that the real cause of their offense was not the breaking of the sabbath but the curing of his illness. But he neither concealed it nor asked for pardon. Instead he boldly confessed the cure. This is how he acted. But consider how unfairly they acted. They do not say, Who is it who made you whole? Rather, they keep bringing up the seeming transgression. Homilies on the Gospel of John 37.2.[5]

5:12 *Who Told You to Do This?*

Identity Hidden Out of Humility. Theodore of Mopsuestia: The healed one did not know who it was who healed him because Jesus hid as soon as he had healed him. It would have been typical of someone looking for glory if he had stayed around with the one whom he had healed. It would have been typical of someone who desired public exposure. But we see our Lord cautiously avoiding this. In fact, it would have been easier to have himself seen as God. Since, however, he appeared as a man and many had this opinion about him, he protected himself from the opinion of those who saw him. Commentary on John 2.5.10-11.[6]

5:13 *Jesus Had Withdrawn*

Jesus Withdraws, Leaving a Perfect Witness. Chrysostom: He did this first of all because the man who had been made whole was the best witness of the cure and could give his testimony with less suspicion in our Lord's absence. His second reason for doing so was so that the fury of people might not be excited more than was necessary. For the mere sight of the object of envy is no small incentive to envy. For these reasons he departed and left them to examine the fact for themselves. Homilies on the Gospel of John 37.2.[7]

A Modest Miracle by Human Standards. Augustine: If we judge this miracle on the basis of low and human standards, it is not at all a striking display of power, and it is only a moderate display of goodness. Of so many who lay sick, only one was healed; although, had he chosen to do so, our Lord could have restored them all by a single word. How should we account for this? We might suppose that his power and goodness were asserted more for imparting knowledge of eternal salvation to the soul than for working a temporal cure on the body. . . . That which received the temporal cure was certain to decay at some point when death arrived, whereas the soul that believed passed into eternal life. Tractates on the Gospel of John 17.1.[8]

5:14 *Jesus' Admonition*

Jesus Is Betrayed by the Healed Man. Theodore of Mopsuestia: After the paralytic apologized, saying that another had ordered him to take up his mat on a sabbath, the Jews turned their rage against the one who had given the order. . . . When he pointed Jesus out to such an enraged and furious people, however, he did not act as a friend. Rather, in order to comply with the rules of the Jews, he betrayed his own benefactor. Nor can one excuse his actions as being

[4]NPNF 1 7:114-15*. [5]NPNF 1 14:129-30**. [6]CSCO 4 3:100-101. [7]NPNF 1 14:130**. [8]NPNF 1 7:111**.

done out of necessity because he felt pressured by the violence of the questioners. Therefore when our Lord came to him in the temple, he spoke these words to the healed man, who had [already] demonstrated his inclination to sin. Commentary on John 2.5.12-15.[9]

Pedagogical Punishment of the Body. Chrysostom: Here we learn in the first place that his disease was the consequence of his sins. Second, we learn that there is really a hell; third, that it is a place of lasting and infinite punishment. . . . But someone might ask, "Do all diseases proceed from sin?" Not all, but most do. Some proceed from different kinds of loose living, since gluttony, intemperance and sloth produce similar sufferings. . . . But why is it that in the case of these paralytics[10] Christ mentions their sins? . . . I know that some slander this paralytic, asserting that he was an accuser of Christ and that therefore this speech was addressed to him.[11] But what about the paralytic in Matthew who heard nearly the same words? For Christ also told him, "Your sins are forgiven you." And so it is clear that this man was not addressed in this way because of what they allege. . . . Rather, Jesus was securing him against future sins.

In healing others, however, he makes no mention of sins at all. And so, it would seem to be the case that the diseases of these men had arisen from their sins, whereas those of the others had come from natural causes only. Or perhaps through these, Jesus is admonishing everybody else. . . . Or he may have admonished this man, knowing his great patience of mind, anticipating that he would bear an admonition, keeping him healthy both by the benefit of the healing and the fear of future ills. . . . It is also a disclosure too of his divinity, for he implies in saying, "Sin no more," that he knew what sins he had formerly committed. Homilies on the Gospel of John 38.1-2.[12]

Healed to a New Life in God. Gregory of Nazianzus: Yesterday you were flung upon a bed, exhausted and paralyzed, and you had no one to put you into the pool when the water should be troubled. Today you have him who is in one person man and God, or rather God and man. You were raised up from your bed, or rather you took up your bed and publicly acknowledged the benefit. Do not again be thrown on your bed by sinning. . . . But as you now are, so walk, mindful of the command. . . . Sin no more lest a worse thing happen to you if you prove yourself to be evil after the blessing you have received. On Holy Baptism, Oration 40.33.[13]

5:16 *The Jews Persecuted Jesus Because He Violated the Sabbath*

Jewish Elders Also Healed on the Sabbath. Irenaeus: The Jewish elders were unwilling to be subject to the law of God, which was to prepare them for the coming of Christ. But they even blamed the Lord for healing on the Sabbath days, which the law did not prohibit. For they did themselves, in one sense, perform acts of healing upon the Sabbath day, when they circumcised a man [on that day]. But they did not blame themselves for transgressing the command of God through tradition and the previously mentioned pharisaical law. Nor did they condemn themselves for not keeping the commandment of the law, which is the love of God. Against Heresies 4.12.1.[14]

5:17 *Jesus and the Father Still Working*

Divine Precedent in the Father. Hilary of Poitiers: He refers to the charge of violating the sabbath, brought against him. My Father works up to this time, and I work. He means that he had a precedent for claiming the right he did, and that what he did was in reality his Father's doing who acted in the Son. And to quiet the jeal-

[9]CSCO 4 3:102. [10]See also Mt 9:2, since Chrysostom is speaking about both accounts. [11]See previous comment of Theodore. [12]NPNF 1 14:131-32*. [13]NPNF 2 7:372*. [14]ANF 1:475*.

ousy that had been raised, because by the use of his Father's name he had made himself equal with God, and to assert the excellence of his birth and nature, he says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do."[15] On the Trinity 7.17.[16]

The Father Works in Christ While Christ Works. Hilary of Poitiers: Their anger was so kindled against him that they wanted to kill him, because he did his works on the sabbath. But let us see also what the Lord answered: "My Father is still working, and I also am working." . . . He speaks that we may recognize in him the power of the Father's nature employing the nature that has that power to work on the sabbath. The Father works in him while he works. Without doubt, then, Jesus works along with the working of the Father. . . . We must regard Jesus as referring to that very work of the Father's which he was then doing since it implies the working of the Father at the very time of his words. . . . If the Father works and the Son works, no union exists between them that merges them into a single person. On the Trinity 9.44.[17]

The Father and Son Are of the Same Essence. Athanasius: The word *still*[18] shows [the Son's] eternal existence in the Father as the Word. For it is proper to the Word to do the Father's works and not to be external to him. . . . He is either seen to be the efficient cause of things that he himself has brought about, or he has no power to cause anything at all. . . . For none of the things that are brought to be is an efficient cause, but all things were made through the Word who would not have brought anything into being if he himself were numbered among the creatures. . . . For by the Word, the things that were not have come into existence. And if through him [i.e., the Son] the [Father] creates and makes, [the Son] is not himself of things created and made. Rather, he is the Word of the Creator God and is known, from the Father's works which he himself works, to be "in the Father and the Father in him" . . . because the Son's essence is proper to the Father, and he is in all points like his Father. Discourses Against the Arians 2.16.20-22.[19]

The Son Equal to God. Augustine: Here he has already indicated that he is equal to God. "My Father," he says, "is working until now, and I too am working." Their literal-minded understanding of the sabbath is disturbed. They imagined that it was because the Lord was tired that he rested, in order to do no more work. They hear, "My Father is working until now," and they are disturbed. But then he adds, "And I too am working," making himself equal to God, and again they are disturbed. Sermon 125.6.[20]

The Son Has the Same Power As the Father. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Here he brings up his Father, who always acts according to his will and authority. He too does not abstain from those works on the sabbath that are beneficial to us. Christ, too, knew that any time is suitable for our salvation. He brings up the Father, he says, in order to show us that this same authority is also in him. As the Father always has the authority to do work without being subject to the law—even though he has decreed the law of rest on the sabbath—so the Son has the same privilege. And there is no precept or law that might prevent him from doing whatever he wants. Commentary on John 2.5.17.[21]

How Did God Rest on the Seventh Day? Augustine: How can both be true when it says that God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made, and what he himself through whom they were made says in the gospel, "My Father is working until now; and I myself am working." . . . The Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered

[15]Jn 5:19. [16]NPNF 2 9:124-25**; CCL 62:277-78. [17]NPNF 2 9:170*. See also Ambrose *On the Holy Spirit* 2. Intro (2). [18]"My Father is working *still*." [19]NPNF 2 4:359-60*. [20]*WSA* 3 4:257**. See also Novatian *On the Trinity* 28 (ANF 5:639). [21]CSCO 4 3:103. See also Ephrem, *Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron* 13.4 (*ECTD* 206-7).

only at the precise time he willed, underlined the mystery of this [Genesis] rest by his burial. It was of course on the day of the Sabbath that he rested in the tomb, and he had the whole of that day as a kind of holy vacation, after he had finished all his works on the sixth day, that is, Preparation Day . . . when he said, "It is finished; and bowing his head he surrendered his spirit."[22] So why should we be surprised if God wished to point forward to this day on which Christ would rest in the grave, before proceeding from then on to work the unfolding of the ages, in order to verify these other words too, "My Father is working until now?"

God can be understood to have rested from establishing different kinds of creatures, because he did not now establish any new kinds any more. But he rested like this in such a way as to continue from then on and up till now to operate the management of the things that were then set in place, not as though at least on that seventh day his power was withheld from the government of heaven and earth and of all the things he had established. If that had been done, they would immediately have collapsed into nothingness. It is the creator's power, after all, and the virtuosity, the skill and tenacity of the almighty, that causes every created thing to subsist. If this tenacious virtuosity ceased for one moment to rule and direct the things that have been created, their various species would at once cease to exist, and every nature would collapse into nothingness. It is not, you see, like a mason building houses; when he has finished he goes away, and his work goes on standing when he has stopped working on it and gone away. No, the world will not be able to go on standing for a single moment if God withdraws from it his controlling hand.

Indeed, the very expression employed by the Lord, "My Father is working until now," points to the continuousness of his work by which he holds together and manages the whole of creation. It could, you see, have been understood differently if he had said, "and is now working," where we would not have to take the work as being continuous. But by saying "until now," he forces us to understand it in the other sense as meaning, that is, from the time when he had worked at the original establishment of all things. On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis 4.11[.21]-12 [.23].[23]

The Father Continues the Work of Creation Through the Son. Augustine: Therefore it is as if he said to the Jews, "Why do you expect that I should not work on the sabbath? The sabbath day was ordained for you as a sign about me. You observe the works of God: I was there when they were made. They were all made by me. . . . The Father made the light, but he spoke that there should be light. If he spoke, it was by his Word that he made it. I was his Word, and I am [his Word]. The world was made by me in those works, and the world is also ruled by me in those works. My Father worked when he made the world, and he still works while he rules the world. Therefore, just as it was by me that he created when he made the world, so it is by me that he rules when he rules." Tractates on the Gospel of John 17.15.[24]

5:18 *Making Himself Equal to God*

He Called God His Own Father. Theodore of Mopsuestia: If he had simply called God his father, they would have not grumbled. But he called him his *own* Father as if he proceeded directly from him and was equal to him. Commentary on John 2 5.18.[25]

The Reason for Hostility. Ambrose: The Evangelist testifies that in calling himself God's own Son, Jesus made himself equal to God. For the Jews are not presented as saying, "For this cause we sought to kill him." Rather, the Evangelist, speaking for himself, says, "For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him."

[22]Jn 19:30. [23]*WSA* 1 13:253-54**. [24]NPNF 1 7:116*. [25]CSCO 4 3:105.

Moreover, he has discovered the cause, [in saying] that the Jews were stirred with desire to slay him because, when as God he broke the sabbath and also claimed God as his own Father, Jesus ascribed to himself not only the majesty of divine authority in breaking the sabbath but also, in speaking of his Father, the right pertaining to eternal equality. On the Christian Faith 2.8.68.[26]

A Lesser Being Could Not Break the Sabbath Law with Impunity. Chrysostom: If he had not been the very Son and of the same essence, the defense he offered here would have been worse than the charge. For no viceroy could clear himself from altering a royal law by asserting that the king also broke the law. Not only would he not escape, but he would even increase the weight of the charge against him. But in this instance, since the dignity is equal, the defense is valid. And so he says, in effect, "Absolve me from the same charges from which you absolve God." Homilies on the Gospel of John 38.2.[27]

Jews Understand What Arians Do Not. Augustine: So, the Jews understood what the Arians do not. For the Arians say that the Son is not equal to the Father, and hence sprang up that heresy that afflicts the church. Tractates on the Gospel of John 17.16.[28]

They Knew What Christ Was Claiming. Chrysostom: But those who do not want to receive these words with a reasonable mind assert that Christ did not make himself equal to God, but only that the Jews thought he did. Come then and let us go over what was said from the beginning. Did the Jews persecute him or not? It is clear to everyone that they did. Did they persecute him for this[29] or something else? Again, it was for this. Did he then break the sabbath or not? No one can have anything to say against the fact that he did. Did he call God his Father, or did he not call him so? This is true too. Then the rest also follows. To call God his Father, to break the sabbath and to be persecuted by the Jews for these things does not belong to the realm of false imagination but is actual fact. This means that his making himself equal to God was a declaration that is true as well.[30] Homilies on the Gospel of John 38.3.[31]

The Evangelist Would Not Have Been Silent if the Jews Were Wrong. Chrysostom: If Jesus had not wished to establish his equality and the Jews had made such a supposition without reason, Jesus would not have allowed their minds to be deceived. He would have corrected them. The Evangelist also would not have remained silent but would have plainly said that the Jews thought this but that Jesus did not actually make himself equal to God, which is what [John] had done elsewhere.[32] Homilies on the Gospel of John 38.3.[33]

The Flesh Seen, but Not the Word. Augustine: In one sense the Jews were right [about their indignation], because a man dared to make himself equal to God. But they were also wrong because they did not understand that it was God in the man. They saw the flesh, but they did not know God. They looked on the dwelling place, but they did not know the dweller. That flesh was a temple; God dwelt within it. Therefore Jesus did not equate his flesh to the Father. It was not the form of the servant that he compared to the Lord—not what he became for us, but what he was when he made us. Tractates on the Gospel of John 18.2.1.[34]

[26]NPNF 2 10:232*. [27]NPNF 1 14:133**. [28]NPNF 1 7:116*. [29]That is, of breaking the sabbath. [30]Lit. "of the same meaning." [31]NPNF 1 14:133-34**. [32]See Jn 2:19. [33]NPNF 1 14:134**. [34]FC 79:125-26**.

Perfect Agreement Between Father and Son John 5:19-21

Overview: Jesus demonstrates that his will and that of the Father are one since he is of one essence with his Father and cannot act contrary to the nature he shares with the Father (Cyril, Chrysostom). The Son does the same things as his Father, which demonstrates their unity of substance (Augustine). But the fact that they both do these things confirms their distinctiveness as persons in the Trinity (Ambrose) and their closeness as Father and Son (Augustine). When Jesus defers to his Father, he turns a seeming weakness into the strength of humility (Theodoret), which in no way affects his own strength or power (Theodore). There is no battle of wills between this Father and Son (Ambrose), which is demonstrated in the fact that the Father loves the Son, not that he is disappointed in him (Cyril of Alexandria).

If the Father, however, shows the Son all that he himself does, doesn't this imply two craftsmen: the artisan who teaches and the son who learns (Augustine)? Rather, it is similar to an object and its reflection in a mirror (Basil). The Father shows himself to the Son as he manifests himself through his Son's works, not as though the Son were ignorant of any of his Father's works (Cyril of Alexandria). The Son enjoys bringing glory to his Father through the works he does, even as the Father enjoys our amazement at what his Son accomplishes (Basil). The Father will show his Son even greater things than the healing of the paralytic (Theodore). The "greater thing" is the resurrection, a power that only God has; thus Jesus, as the one who resurrects, again establishes his equality with the Father (Cyril of Alexandria).

5:19 *The Son Cannot Do Anything of Himself*

Jesus Does the Will of God the Father. Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus, as it were, gently lowers the honor befitting the Only Begotten while at the same time raising the nature of humanity, being at once Lord and also considered among servants. He says that the Son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the Father do. For whatever works the Father does the Son does as well. Since he is able to accomplish the works of God the Father and to work in concert with the One who begot him, he reveals the identity of his essence. For things that have the same nature with one another will work alike. But for those who do not share a common nature, their mode of working will not be the same. Therefore as true God of true God the Father, he says that he can do those things equally with him. But, so that he may appear not only equal in power to the Father, but like-minded in all things and sharing one will with the Father, Jesus says that he can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.6.[1]

[1]LF 43:246-47**.

Being of One Essence. Cyril of Alexandria: When . . . a person says that he cannot carry an enormously heavy piece of wood he establishes his innate weakness. But another says (being by nature a reasonable person and born of a father of a reasonable nature), "I cannot do anything on my own that would contradict the nature of my parent." The words "I cannot" express the stability of essence and its inability to be anything it is not. . . . This is how you should hear Christ saying, "The Son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the Father do." Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.6.[2]

Inability to Act Contrary to Father. Chrysostom: But why didn't he say that "he does nothing contrary" instead of "he cannot do"? It was so that he might again show the invariableness and exactness of the equality, for the expression does not impute weakness to him. On the contrary, it shows his great power. Homilies on the Gospel of John 38.4.[3]

Shared Substance Implies Shared Work. Augustine: Now we understood that the Father does not do something separately, which, when the Son has seen it, he, too, does after having examined the work of his Father. Rather, he said, "The Son cannot do anything of himself, but only what he sees the Father doing," because the whole Son is from the Father, and his whole substance and power is from him who begot him. He had said that he does these things in the same way that the Father does, so that we do not think that the Father does some things and the Son other things. Rather, with the same power[4] the Son does the very same things that the Father does when the Father does them through the Son. Tractates on the Gospel of John 21.2.[5]

No Equality If Father and Son Are the Same Person. Ambrose: The Son, therefore, is both entitled and proved the equal of the Father—a true equality, which both excludes difference of Godhead and discovers, together with the Son, the Father also, to whom the Son is equal. For there is no equality where there is difference, nor again where there is but one person, inasmuch as none is by himself equal to himself. And so, the Evangelist has shown why it is fitting that Christ should call himself the Son of God, that is, make himself equal with God. On the Christian Faith 2.8.69.[6]

Like Flame and Light. Augustine: The works of the Father and the Son are inseparable. But this phrase "the Son cannot do anything of himself" is what would be the case if he were to say, "The Son is not of himself." For if the Son is, he was born; if he was born, he is of him from whom he was born. But, nonetheless, he begot an equal to himself. For nothing was lacking to him who begot; neither did he who begot one coeternal search for a time to beget. He who brought forth the Word from himself also did not search for a mother to beget. Nor did the Father beget a lesser Son by preceding him in age. Perhaps, someone says, after many centuries, in his old age God had a Son. As the Father is without old age, even so the Son is without growth; neither has the one grown old nor has the other grown. But an equal begot an equal; an eternal, an eternal.

How does an eternal, someone says, beget an eternal? It does so in the same way a temporal flame generates temporal light. For the generating flame is of the same duration as the light that it generates. The flame does not precede in time the generated light. Rather, the light begins from the instant when the flame begins. Give me flame without light, and I give you God the Father without the Son. Tractates on the Gospel of John 20.8.1-2.[7]

The Powerless Power of Christ. Theodoret of Cyr: The Word, therefore, came down, not as he is in himself, but by becoming

[2]LF 43:253*. [3]NPNF 1 14:134. [4]See Ambrose *On the Christian Faith* 1.2.13 (NPNF 2 10:203). [5]NPNF 1 7:138*. [6]NPNF 2 10:232*. [7]FC 79:171*.

flesh—not the form of God but the form of a slave.[8] This, then, is the one who said that he could do nothing on his own, because lack of power is a sign of weakness. For as darkness is to light and death is to life, in the same way weakness is opposed to power. And yet Christ is God's power.[9] Power is usually not powerless, for, if power were weak, what would have power? When the Word proclaims that he can do nothing, therefore, he is clearly not attributing lack of power to the divinity of the only begotten One but is testifying that the lack of power is due to the weakness of our nature. And the flesh is weak, as Scripture says: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."[10] Dialogue 48.[11]

No Diminution in Power or Authority. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Now, if he had wanted to signify a diminution of his strength and power, he should have said, "But only what the Father orders" or "what [the Father] gives him the power to do." But now he added, "but only what he sees the Father doing," which indicates similarity. Actually, if he does only what he sees the Father doing, he evidently possesses a perfect similarity with the Father in his action. And this would be impossible if he did not have the same power. Commentary on John 2.5.19.[12]

Christ's Power Not at Cross-Purposes with the Father's. Ambrose: Let unbelievers meditate on the fact that, both by nature and sovereignty, the Son is one with the Father and that his power at work is not at cross-purposes with the Father, inasmuch as "whatever the Father does, the Son does as well." For no one can do in the same way the same work that another had done unless he shares in the unity of the same nature, but at the same time also is not inferior in the method of working. On the Christian Faith 4.5.60.[13]

5:20 *The Father Loves the Son*

The Father's Love Proves the Son's Works Are Approved. Cyril of Alexandria: For if the Father loves the Son completely, it is plain that the Son loves his Father, not in a way that would disappoint him but in a way that would bring his Father joy in what his Son does and works. And so it is pointless for them to persecute him when he refuses not to show mercy on the sabbath. . . . The Father would never have loved him if he had gone contrary to the will of his Father as if he were accustomed to doing things on his own and doing whatever he wanted by himself. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.6.[14]

Two Craftsmen? Augustine: Again mortal thought is troubled. The Father shows the Son what he himself does. "Therefore," someone says, "the Father does [his work] separately so that the Son may be able to see what he does." Again there occurs to human thought two craftsmen, as it were, as though an artisan would teach his son his artistic skill and show him whatever he does so that [his son] also may be able to do it himself. He says, "He shows him all that he himself does." Therefore when the Father does something, is it that the Son does not do [that same thing] so that he can see what the Father is doing?[15] This, at any rate is certain, that "all things were made through him and without him was made nothing."[16] From this we see how the Father shows the Son what he makes, although the Father makes nothing except what he makes through the Son. Tractates on the Gospel of John 21.2.2.[17]

Object and Reflection in a Mirror. Basil the Great: Let us rather, in a sense befitting the Godhead, perceive a transmission of will, like the reflection of an object in a mirror, passing without note of time from Father to Son. "For the Father loves the Son and shows him all things," so

[8]See Phil 2:6-8. [9]See 1 Cor 1:24. [10]Mt 26:41. [11]FC 106:80-81*. See also FC 106:227. [12]CSCO 4 3:110-11. [13]NPNF 2 10:269**. [14]LF 43:254-55*. [15]Augustine expects this hypothetical question to be answered no. [16]Jn 1:3. [17]FC 79:179-80*. See also *Sermon* 126.10 (*WSA* 3 4:276).

that "all things that the Father has" belong to the Son, not gradually accruing to him little by little, but are rather with him all together and at once. On the Spirit 8.20.[18]

The Father Depicts His Own Works in the Works of His Son. Cyril of Alexandria: The Father again shows the Son what he himself does, not as though setting before him things depicted on a tablet or teaching him as though ignorant (for he knows all things as God). Rather, the Father depicts himself wholly in the nature of his Son and shows in his Son his own natural properties in order that from these properties he [the Father] has and shows, the Son may know what and who his Father is that begat him by nature. Therefore Christ says that "no one knows who the Son is but the Father, or who the Father is, but the Son."[19] For the accurate knowledge of each is in both, not by learning but by nature. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.6.[20]

Jesus Alludes to the Resurrection and Last Judgment. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He said that "greater works than these"—evidently greater than the healing of the paralyzed man—had to be shown by him so that they would be astonished. Here he alludes to the general resurrection and to those things that he will do when he appears [again] to stand in judgment of all things. When he does this, there will be no denying his dignity. At that time, they will be astonished—and for good reason—learning who he [truly] was and what role he has been given. Undoubtedly, after seeing that, they will agree concerning the nature dwelling in him. Commentary on John 2 5.20-21.[21]

The Father Enjoys Our Amazement. Basil the Great: He says that "the Son can do nothing of his own accord." Where is the source of his perfect wisdom? "The Father . . . has himself given me his command of what to say and what to speak."[22] Through all these words he guides us to the knowledge of the Father; he directs our amazement at everything he has made so that we may know the Father through him. The work of the Father is not separate or distinct from the work of the Son. Whatever the Son "sees the Father doing . . . that the Son does likewise." The Father enjoys our awe at everything which proceeds from the glory of the Only Begotten. He rejoices both in his Son who accomplishes such deeds and in the deeds themselves, and he exults in being known as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "for whom and through whom all things exist."[23] On the Spirit 8.19.[24]

5:21 *The Son Gives Life to Whomever He Wishes*

Only God Can Raise the Dead. Cyril of Alexandria: See again in these words clear proof of his equality. For how can he be inferior in anything if he works equally in the reviving of the dead? Or how can he be of another nature and alien to the Father when he is radiant with the same properties? For the power of resurrection, which is alike in both the Father and the Son, is a property of the divine essence. But it is not as though the Father separately and of himself resurrects some, and the Son separately and apart from the Father resurrects others. For since the Son has in himself by nature the Father, the Father does everything and works all things through the Son. But since the Father has the power of resurrection in his own nature, as also does the Son, the Son attributes the power of resurrecting the dead as though accruing to each separately. Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.6.[25]

[18]NPNF 2 8:14. [19]Lk 10:22. [20]LF 43:255-56*. [21]CSCO 4 3:114. See also Eusebius *Proof of the Gospel* 9.13 (*POG* 2:179-80), where he connects Jesus' words with the prophecies of Is. 35:4, 61:2; Ps 72:1. [22]Jn 12:49. [23]Heb 2:10. [24]*OHS* 39*. [25]LF 43:257**.

Judgment of Father and Son John 5:22-24

Overview: Christ exercises our minds here in trying to understand seemingly contradictory statements regarding his relationship with the Father. When he says that the Father judges no one, he is not saying that the Father will not judge at the last judgment. Rather, no one will see the invisible Father in the judgment; they will see only the visible Son of man, who will return to judge in the same way he ascended (Augustine). It is also true that the Father has given judgment to the Son from the beginning (Tertullian) in the act of generation (Ambrose). This judgment in some sense is a gift, as Jesus here alludes to the authority his Father has given him as judge at the last judgment (Hilary). As judge, however, he is also our advocate (Ambrose).

Those who try to denigrate Christ's honor because he speaks of honoring the Son even as they honor the Father should realize that here too Jesus is establishing his equality with the Father because Father and Son are alike in nature (Cyril of Alexandria). One cannot acknowledge and worship the Father who does not acknowledge and worship the Son (Lactantius), since only things of the same nature can be considered equal in honor (Hilary). Christ defers the glory of salvation to the Father when he says that the one who believes in the one who sent him has eternal life (Chrysostom). Such a person does not enter into judgment because he listened to Christ and trusted his promises (Augustine). In fact, he not only will avoid the tribulation of judgment but also will be honored by the judge (Theodore). He will pass over from the death of unbelief to the life of faith, or from the death of the old Adam to the new life, which is everlasting. More care and labor should be spent on preparing for that which is eternal than seeking to extend what is only temporary (Augustine).

5:22 *The Father Judges No One*

Christ Exercising Our Minds. Augustine: A little before we were thinking that the Father does something that the Son does not do,[1] . . . as though the Father were doing and the Son were seeing. In this way there was creeping in on our mind a carnal conception, as if the Father did something the Son did not do but that the Son was looking on while the Father showed what he was doing. Then, as the Father was doing what the Son did not do, just now we see the Son doing what the Father does not do. How he turns us about and keeps our mind busy! He leads us here and there, not allowing us to remain resting with our human conceptions so that by changing he may exercise us, by exercising he may cleanse us, by cleansing he may render us capable of receiving, and may fill us when made capable. Tractates on the Gospel of John 21.12.[2]

The Father Still Judges, but Through the Visible Son of Man. Augustine: How can it be said, "The Father judges no one"? For since the Father has begotten the Son equal to himself, the Father does indeed judge with the Son. Therefore Jesus must have meant that in the

[1]See Jn 5:20. [2]NPNF 1 7:142**.

judgment, it is not the form of God but the form of the Son of man that will appear. Not that the Father, who has committed all judgment to the Son, will not judge, because the Son identifies him as "one who seeks and judges."[3] But . . . it is as if it was said: No one will see the Father in the judgment of the living and the dead, but everyone will see the Son, because he is also the Son of man so that he can be seen even by the ungodly. On the Trinity 1.13.29.[4]

The Son As Judge from the Beginning. Tertullian: The Father has given judgment to the Son even from the very beginning. For when he speaks of all power and all judgment and says that all things were made by him and all things have been delivered into his hand, he allows no exception [in respect] of time, because they would not be all things unless they were the things of all time. It is the Son, therefore, who has been from the beginning administering judgment, throwing down the haughty tower and dividing the tongues, punishing the whole world by the violence of waters, raining upon Sodom and Gomorrah fire and brimstone, as the Lord from the Lord. Against Praxeas 16.[5]

Judgment Given as Act of Generation. Ambrose: He has given [judgment to the Son], that is to say, not out of largess[6] but in the act of generation.[7] See, then, how unwilling God was that you should dishonor his Son—even to the point that he gave him to be your judge. On the Christian Faith 2.12.100.[8]

Judgment a Gift from Father to Son. Hilary of Poitiers: The statement that all judgment is given to the Son teaches both his birth and his Sonship. Only a nature that is altogether one with the Father's could possess all things. And a Son can possess nothing except as a gift. But all judgment has been given to him since he gives life to whomever he will. Now we cannot suppose that judgment is taken away from the Father, although he does not exercise it. For the Son's whole power of judgment proceeds from the Father's since it is a gift from him. On the Trinity 7.20.[9]

The Judge Is Also Our Advocate. Ambrose: But if there is fear that the judge may be too harsh, think about who your judge is. For the Father has given every judgment to Christ. Can Christ then condemn you when he redeemed you from death and offered himself on your behalf? Can he condemn you when he knows that your life is what was gained by his death? Jacob and the Happy Life 1.6.26.[10]

5:23 *Honoring the Son as the Father Is Honored*

The "As" of Equal Honor. Cyril of Alexandria: [Our opponents] say that the word *as* does not altogether always introduce equality of acts in those things to which it is affixed but often marks out a kind of likeness, as in, "Be merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful." Does this, they say, imply that we are just as merciful as the Father because of the word *as*? . . . What then is our answer to this? . . . When "as" is applied to things unlike in their nature, it does not wholly introduce absolute equality but rather likeness and resemblance. But when it is applied to things in all respects alike, it shows equality in all things and similitude. So, for instance when speaking of the brightness of the sun in heaven and the brightness of silver here on earth, their natures are diverse. . . . In this case, we rightly say that earthly matter cannot attain to equal brightness with the sun but only to a certain likeness and resemblance, even though the word *as* is used. But take the example of the holy disciples Peter

[3]Jn 8:50. [4]NPNF 1 3:34**. See also Augustine *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 21.13 (NPNF 1 7:142-43) and *Sermon* 214.9 (*WSA* 3 6:156). [5]ANF 3:611*. [6]Ambrose seems to be contradicting Hilary of Poitiers below, but this has more to do with the purpose of their writing in seeking to guard Christ's distinctiveness and his equality. [7]Augustine offers some caveats to this understanding in *On the Trinity* 1.13. [8]NPNF 2 10:237*. [9]NPNF 2 9:126*. [10]FC 65:136*.

and John, who, both in respect to nature and piety toward God, do not fail as accurate likenesses of one another. And then say, "Let John be honored by all, even as Peter." Is the "as" here powerless so that equal honor should not be paid to both? . . . According to this analogy then, when the "as" is applied to the Father and the Son, why should we shrink from crowning both with equal honors? Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.8.[11]

You Cannot Acknowledge the Father If the Son Is Not Acknowledged. Lactantius: He who has not acknowledged the Son is unable to acknowledge the Father. This is wisdom, and this is the mystery of the supreme God. God willed that he should be acknowledged and worshiped through him. On this account he sent the prophets beforehand to announce his coming so that when the things that had been foretold were fulfilled in him, then he might be believed by people to be both the Son of God and God. Nor, however, must the opinion be entertained that there are two gods, for the Father and the Son are one. Epitome of the Divine Institutes 49.[12]

The Honor of Christ Inseparable from the Honor of God. Hilary of Poitiers: It is only things of the same nature that are equal in honor. Equality of honor denotes that there is no separation between the honored. But the demand for equality of honor is combined with the revelation of Christ's birth. Since the Son is to be honored as the Father, and since they do not seek the Son's honor, even though he is the only God, he is not excluded from the honor of the only God. For his honor is one and the same as that of God. . . . He who does not seek the honor of the only God does not seek the honor of Christ also. Accordingly the honor of Christ is inseparable from the honor of God. On the Trinity 9.23.[13]

5:24 *Hearing and Believing*

Words Chosen Carefully to Avoid Boasting. Chrysostom: Christ did not say, "He who hears my words and believes in me," since they would have thought this was empty boasting and arrogance. . . . To say "believes in him who sent me" was a better way of making his discourse acceptable when they learned that those who hear him believe in the Father also. Homilies on the Gospel of John 39.2.[14]

Who Will Not Come Under Judgment? Augustine: But who is this [favored person]? Will there be any one better than the apostle Paul, who says, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ"? . . . And do you dare to promise yourself that you shall not come into judgment? I would never promise this to myself, you say. But I believe the one who made the promise. The Savior speaks; the truth promises. He is the one who said these words to me. . . . I then have heard the words of my Lord, and I believe. Although I was an unbeliever, I now have become a believer. As he instructed me, I have passed from death to life so that I do not come into judgment. This was not by my presumption but by his promise. Tractates on the Gospel of John 22.4.[15]

Honored by the Judge. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Actually, he tells what the benefit is for those who honor or believe in him. . . . The one who obeys, he says, my words and believes is made a participant in eternal life. Such a person will not only avoid the judgment, that is, the tribulations of judgment, but will even be held in honor, and certainly honor will be attributed to him by the judge himself. Commentary on John 2.5.24.[16]

From Death of Unbelief to Life of Faith. Augustine: Just in case you think that faith will

[11]LF 43:262-63**. [12]ANF 7:242*. [13]NPNF 2 9:162-63*. See also Athanasius *Against the Arians* 1.18, 33; 3.7. [14]NPNF 1 14:139**. [15]NPNF 1 7:145-46**; CCL 36:271-73. [16]CSCO 4 3:117-18.

save you from bodily death . . . be assured that you will pay the penalty, death, which you must pay for Adam's transgression. For Adam, in whom all of us were then, heard the divine sentence, "You shall surely die." And the divine sentence cannot be voided. But when you have suffered the death of the old Adam, you shall receive the life of the new and shall pass from death to life. Meanwhile, make the transition of life now. What is your life? Faith: "The just shall live by faith."[17] . . . Christ has enlightened you, and now you believe, passing immediately from death to life. Abide in that to which you have passed, and you shall not come into judgment. Tractates on the Gospel of John 22.6.[18]

The Care and Labor Spent on Lengthening Life. Augustine: Because people love being alive on this earth, they are promised life. And because they are very afraid of dying, they are promised a life that is eternal. . . . But we see the lovers of this present transitory life strive so hard for it, that when the fear of death looms up they do everything they can, not to eliminate death but simply to put it off. The pains a person will take, the trouble he will endure when death looms ahead, running away, going into hiding, giving everything he has and paying his ransom, struggling, enduring all sorts of torments and afflictions, bringing in doctors and whatever else a person can do! But notice how one can take endless pains and spend all of his means in order to live a little longer; but when it comes to living forever, he can do nothing. If so much care and labor then is spent on gaining a little additional length of life, how ought we to strive after life eternal? And if those people who try in every possible way to put off death are thought to be wise, even though they can only live a few days longer, how foolish are they who live in such a way that they lose the eternal day? Sermon 127.2.[19]

[17]Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17. [18]NPNF 1 7:146-47**; CCL 36:226. In *Letter* 55.1 Augustine interprets this passage in light of the Passover from death to life (NPNF 1 1:303-4). [19]*WSA* 3 4:282**; PL 38:707.

RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT JOHN 5:25-29

Overview: Jesus tells his disciples that the future hour of resurrection is not that far off (Chrysostom), when both the Father and the Son will raise the dead (Augustine). The creator of Adam will recreate us (Apostolic Constitutions) and by his Spirit raise our flesh, which he also had taken on himself and buried in order to resurrect it (Tertullian). Those who believe and obey Christ's voice, who before were the living dead, are now the ones who shall live (Augustine).

Christ also states that the Father has life in himself, because as it is with the Father so it is with the Son. Both have life in themselves, and our life is found only in them, not in ourselves. Although the Son already is life according to his divine nature, the Father "gave" him life in the act of begetting so that the Son would have life in himself and not need it from any other source (Augustine). Life gives birth to life (Hilary). We may also understand these words to refer to his human nature, for life was given to the flesh of Christ, who is himself life (Theodore).

In the end, Christ will judge in the same form, as Son of man, in which he was judged (Augustine). He is given this authority not because he is the Son of man but because he is the Son of God (Ammonius). His outward appearance as Son of man, however, may evoke skepticism (Theodore); but the same one who as Son of man has the divine power to raise the dead has the power to judge (Chrysostom). At that future time, there will be a bodily resurrection, something that heretics deny (Tertullian). But Jesus makes it plain here that not only will this be a bodily resurrection but that it will be a bodily resurrection either to eternal life or to eternal torment (Augustine). This should give us pause to contemplate our last day (Basil). Some will be welcomed by the unspeakable brilliance of the Trinity, while others must endure being outcast from God along with the pain of an unrelenting conscience (Gregory of Nazianzus).

5:25 *The Hour Is Coming and Now Is*

The Hour Is Near. Chrysostom: Jesus provides proof by his works, saying, "The hour comes" and then adds, "and now is" to let us know that it will not be long before that hour comes. . . . For just as in the future resurrection we are roused by hearing his voice speaking to us,[1] so it is now. Homilies on the Gospel of John 39.2.[2]

Both Father and Son Raise. Augustine: Some one might ask Jesus: The Father raises the one who believes in him. But what about you? Do you not raise? Observe that the Son also raises whomever he wants . . . "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Tractates on the Gospel of John 23.14.[3]

The Creator of Adam Will Recreate Us. Apostolic Constitutions: The one who made the body of Adam out of the earth will raise up the bodies of the rest, and that of the first man, after their decay . . . He, therefore, who brings about that decay will himself bring about the resurrection. And he who said, "The Lord took dust from the ground, and formed man and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul,"[4] added after humanity's disobedience, "Earth you are, and to earth you shall return."[5] This same one promised us resurrection afterwards, for he says, "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those that hear shall live." Constitutions of the Holy Apostles 5.1.7.[6]

"The Dead" Indicates the Flesh. Tertullian: Thus, in the present instance, we have the Spirit giving life to the flesh, which has been subdued by death. For "the hour," he says, "is coming, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." Now, what is "the dead" but the flesh? And what is "the voice of God" but the Word? And what is the Word but the Spirit,[7] who shall justly raise the flesh that he had once himself become and that too from death, which he himself suffered, and from the grave, which he himself once entered? On the Resurrection of the Flesh 37.[8]

[1]1 Thess 4:16. [2]NPNF 1 14:139**. [3]NPNF 1 7:157**; CCL 36:243. [4]Gen 2:7. [5]Gen 3:19. [6]ANF 7:440*. [7]Tertullian is speaking of the divine nature of the Son, not to be confused with the third person of the Trinity. [8]ANF 3:572*.

Those Who Believe Will Live. Augustine: So those who do not hear [the voice] will not live. What is the meaning of "those who hear it"? Those who believe and obey it, they are the ones who shall live. So before they believed and obeyed, they were lying there dead; they were walking around, and they were dead. What were they good for, walking around dead? And yet if any of them were to die in the body, people would scurry about, dig the grave, put the corpse in a coffin, carry it out—and the dead would bury the dead, of whom it is said, "Let the dead bury their dead."[9] Sermon 127.7.[10]

5:26 *The Father Has Life in Himself*

Life "in Himself." Augustine: Why did he add "in himself"? It would suffice for him to say, "For as the Father has life, so he has given to the Son also to have life." And yet, he has added "in himself."

For if the Father has life in himself, the Son also has life in himself. He intended for us to understand something when he said "in himself." A secret is locked up here in this word; let there be knocking that it may be opened.[11] O Lord, what is it that you said? Why did you add "in himself"? For did not the apostle Paul whom you made to live have life? "He did," he says. Dead people may live again and may pass by believing in your word. When they have passed, will they not have life in you? "They will have; for I said a little before, 'He who hears my words and believes him who sent me has life everlasting.'" Therefore, those who believe in you have life—and you did not say "in themselves." But when you were speaking about the Father, you said, "As the Father has life in himself." Again when you were speaking about yourself you said, "So he has given to the Son also to have life in himself." As he has, so he has given. Where does he have it? "In himself." Where has he given it? "In himself." Where does Paul have it? Not in himself, but in Christ. Where do you, a man of faith have it? Not in yourself, but in Christ. Let us see if the apostle says this: "And I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me."[12] Tractates on the Gospel of John 22.9.1-2.[13]

The Father Gives and the Son Receives. Augustine: "As the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son also to have life in himself." Therefore, [the Son] does not live by participation; rather, he lives without change and in every respect is, himself, life. The Father has given the Son to have life. As the Father has, so he has given. What difference is there? The difference is that the one has given, the other has received. Did the Son already exist when he received? Do we understand that Christ was once without light when he is himself the wisdom of the Father about which it was said, "It is the brightness of eternal life?"[14]

Therefore, when it says, "He has given to the Son" it is as if he said, "He begat a Son," since the Father gave by begetting.[15] Just as the Father gave the son *to be*, he also gave him to be *life* and he gave him to be life *in himself*. What does it mean to be life in himself? It means that he would not need life from any other source. It means that he himself would be the fullness of life out of which others, who believe in him, might [truly] have life while they live. Therefore "He has given to him to have life in himself." He has given to whom? He has given, so to speak, to his Word, to him who "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God."[16] Tractates on the Gospel of John 22.10.3-4.[17]

Life Gives Birth to Life. Hilary of Poitiers: He bore witness that life, to the fullest extent, is his gift from the living God. Now if the living Son was born from the living Father, that birth took place without a new nature coming into existence. Nothing new comes into existence when the living is begotten by the living, for life

[9]Lk 9:60. [10]*WSA* 3 4:285*. [11]See Lk 11:9. [12]See Gal 2:20. [13]FC 79:205*. [14]Cf. Wis 7:26. [15]See also Ambrose *On the Christian Faith* 3.16.133 (NPNF 2 10:261). [16]Cf. Jn 1:1. [17]FC 79:207*.

was not sought out from the nonexistent in order to receive birth. And life, which receives its birth from life, must—because of that unity of nature and because of the mysterious event of that perfect and ineffable birth—live always in [Christ], who lives and has the life of the living in himself. On the Trinity 7.27.[18]

Jesus Speaks of His Human Nature. Theodore of Mopsuestia: The Father, he says, gave him his same ability to raise [from the dead] and conferred on him the same power to judge. And, as far as saying these things about the man [Jesus], he is correct because in his union with the Word he received omnipotence like the Father has.[19] Commentary on John 2.5.26-27.[20]

5:27 *Authority to Execute Judgment*

As He Was Judged, So Shall He Judge. Augustine: The Son of man will be the judge here. That form will pass judgment here that had judgment passed on it here. Listen and understand. The prophet had long ago said the same thing: "They will see the one whom they pierced."[21] They will see the very form that they struck with a lance. He will take his seat as judge, the very one who stood before a judge. He will condemn the truly guilty, the very one who was found falsely guilty. He is the one who will come and it is in the form [of man] that he will come [to judge]. Sermon 127.10.[22]

He Is Not Our Judge Because He Is the Son of Man. Ammonius. Some think that it should read, "He gave him authority also to execute judgment *because* he is the Son of man." But this connection makes no sense, for he is not our judge "because he is the Son of man," but rather because he is the Son of God. That is why he is our judge. Fragments on John 167.[23]

5:28 *Do Not Marvel at This*

Jesus' Outward Appearance May Cause Skepticism. Theodore of Mopsuestia: But when he realized that such a lofty speech was quite above his visible nature, he added, "Do not be astonished at this." . . . By considering this visible nature, he says, have no doubts about what I said, that is, about the hour that is coming, when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out. There will be division among them, and each will have his retribution according to his merit. Commentary on John 2.5.28-29.[24]

Do Not Let Outward Appearances Fool You. Chrysostom: Paul of Samosata reads it, "Has given him power to execute judgment because he is the Son of man." But this connection has no meaning, for Jesus does not receive the power to judge because he was human (otherwise, on this supposition, what would prevent everyone from being judges), but because he is the ineffable Son of God. This is the reason he is called Judge. We must read it then, "Because he is the Son of man, do not marvel at this." The fact that Christ's hearers thought he was a mere man, coupled with the fact that what he asserted of himself was too lofty to be true of people (or even angels or of any being short of God himself), was a strong obstacle in the way of their believing. Our Lord notices this and removes this obstacle. "Do not marvel," he says, "that he is the Son of man. For the hour is coming when all who are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God." Homilies on the Gospel of John 39.3.[25]

The Resurrection Will Be Bodily. Tertullian: None will, after such words, be able to interpret the dead "that are in the graves" as any other than the bodies of the flesh, because the

[18]NPNF 2 9:130*. [19]The Syriac again evidences a sharp distinction between the divine and human natures of Christ. [20]CSCO 4 3:118. [21]Zech 12:10. [22]*WSA* 3 4:287*. [23]*JKGK* 238. In 5:28 below, Chrysostom identifies Paul of Samosata as the one Ammonius has in mind. This passage can, however, also be understood as Theodore interprets it, i.e., the human nature is given the power to judge. [24]CSCO 4 3:119. [25]NPNF 1 14:140**.

graves themselves are nothing but the resting place of corpses. It is incontestable that even those who partake of "the old man," that is to say, sinful people—in other words, those who are dead through their ignorance of God (whom our heretics foolishly insist on understanding by the word *graves*)—are plainly here spoken of as having to come from their graves for judgment. But how are graves to come forth from graves?

After the Lord's words, what are we to think of the purport of his actions when he raises dead persons from their biers *and* their graves? To what end did he do so? If it was only for the mere exhibition of his power or to afford the temporary favor of restoration to life, it was really no great matter for him to raise people to die over again. If, however, as was the truth, it was rather to put in secure keeping people's belief in a future resurrection, then it must follow from the particular form of his own examples that the resurrection mentioned will be a bodily one. On the Resurrection of the Flesh 37-38.[26]

5:29 *The Resurrection of Life and the Resurrection of Condemnation*

Resurrection to Eternal Life or Eternal Death. Augustine: The apostle answers you and says: I know what I am talking about. You say the pagans are delivered from the body of this death, because the last day of this life is coming, and they will be released in due time from the body of this death. The day is also coming "when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice, and those who have done good will come forth to the resurrection of life." There you have the ones delivered from the body of this death. But he also says, "Those who have done evil will come to the resurrection of judgment." See, they will return to the body of this death. The body of this death is coming back to the wicked. They will never be released from it. Then it will not be eternal life but eternal death, because it is eternal punishment. Sermon 154.16.[27]

Picture the Final Judgment. Basil the Great: Think again of your last day. . . . The distress, the gasping for breath, the hour of death, the imminent sentence of God, the angels hastening on their way, the soul fearfully dismayed and lashed to agony by the consciousness of sin, turning itself piteously to things of this life and to the inevitable necessity of that long life to be lived elsewhere. Picture to me, as it rises in your imagination, the conclusion of all human life, when the Son of God shall come in his glory with his angels . . . when he shall come to judge the quick and dead to give to everyone according to what they have done. Letter 46.5.[28]

Two Opposite Human Fates. Gregory of Nazianzus: Those who have done good shall go into the resurrection of life, now hidden in Christ[29] and to be manifested hereafter with him. And those who have done evil shall go into the resurrection of judgment to which those who have not believed have been condemned already by the word, which judges them.[30] Some will be welcomed by the unspeakable light and the vision of the holy and royal Trinity, which now shines on them with greater brilliancy and purity and unites itself wholly to the whole soul. . . . The others . . . must endure the being outcast from God and the shame of conscience which has no limit. On His Father's Silence, Oration 16.9.[31]

[26]ANF 3:572*. [27]*WSA* 3 5:77. [28]NPNF 2 8:151*. [29]Col 3:3. [30]Jn 3:18; 12:48. [31]NPNF 2 7:250.

THE WITNESS OF THE SON AND THE FATHER JOHN 5:30-47

Overview: The Son can do nothing on his own but does everything through the power of the Trinity (Cyril of Alexandria). Christ's will is in concert with that of the Father and the Spirit (Chrysostom), while in our fallen nature we seek to do our own will (Augustine). No one who comes on the authority of another establishes that authority as his own (Tertullian). And so Christ alludes to another, John the Baptist, as one who testifies on his behalf (Theodore) and as someone whom the people would believe (Chrysostom) because he was sent by God (Ephrem). John was only a lamp; everyone, including the apostles and prophets, is only a lamp in comparison with Christ, who is the true light (Augustine). Christ did not need John's testimony but welcomed his lamp of testimony, which, even in its increase, prepared for its own extinction with the coming dominance of the sun (Ephrem).

Christ's works are evidence that he has been sent by the Father since the works he does could be done by no one else. And they demonstrate that Father and Son possess one inseparable nature (Hilary). Despite his appearances to Moses and the prophets, Jesus says that they never heard or saw God. He says this in order to impress on his hearers that God is above our anthropomorphic language (Chrysostom), but also that his voice and form were standing in front of them (Cyril of Alexandria) since the Word of God is the form of his Father (Athanasius). This, however, can only be apprehended by faith, which they do not have, and so they miss out on the treasures and the power for life that

the Scriptures offer them (Chrysostom, Sahdona). But Jesus is not as concerned for the glory they give him as much as their response to his rebuke, which he hopes will turn them toward virtue (Theodore).

Psalm 118 (117 LXX) prophesied of the one who would come in the name of the Lord his Father but would be rejected (Eusebius).The antichrist will come in his own name and will be received more readily than Christ (Hilary) by those who follow a similar inclination toward their own glory, rather than that of the Father. The antichrist makes this kind of glory look much more appealing (Theodore), but it will always come up short for those who seek human honor over God's (Cyril of Alexandria).

Jesus appeals to their own authorities in his accusations. They, however, do not even believe Moses, who taught about Christ (Chrysostom) in the very words of Christ (Irenaeus) and who was given the law by Christ the Mediator (Hilary). But Christ is hidden in the law as a kernel of barley is hidden in the husk (Augustine).

5:30 *The Son Can Do Nothing on His Own Authority*

The Son Works Through the Power of the Holy Trinity. Cyril of Alexandria: Since the Son is of one essence with the Father, by his nature he possesses all the characteristics of him who begat him and essentially attains to one Godhead with him by reason of [his] nature. He is in the Father, and likewise he has the Father in himself. Thus, he [properly] attributes to the Father the power of his own works, not excluding himself from the power of doing them but attributing all things to the operation of the one Godhead. For there is one Godhead in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. . . . Since he was made man and in the form of a servant he, who as God and Lord is the lawgiver, is himself also made under the law. Therefore, sometimes he exists as though under the law and sometimes as though above the law—and has undisputed authority for both. But, he is speaking now with the Jews as a law-abiding man, as one who is not able to transgress the commands ordered from above or venturing to do anything of his own mind that is contrary to the divine law. This is why he says, "I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge." Commentary on the Gospel of John 2.9.[1]

The Judgment of the Father Is That of the Son Also. Chrysostom: Christ's meaning is nothing other than this: I do not have a will different and apart from that of the Father. Rather, if [the Father] desires anything, then I do as well. If I desire it, then so does he. Since therefore no one could object to the Father judging, so neither may anyone object to me, for the sentence of each is given from the same mind." And if [Jesus] utters these words rather as a man, do not be surprised that they still considered him to be a mere man. . . . "For as in the case of people, [he might say], one who is free from selfishness cannot be justly charged with having given an unfair decision, so neither will you now be able to accuse me. One who has his own ends in view may incur suspicion of injustice, but one who does not have his own interests at heart cannot be suspected of such injustice." Homilies on the Gospel of John 39.4.[2]

We Want to Do Our Own Will. Augustine: The only Son says, "I seek not my own will," and yet we want to do our own will! See how low the one who is equal to the Father humbles himself! . . . Let us then do the will of the Father, Christ and Holy Spirit, for this Trinity has one will, power and majesty. Tractates on the Gospel of John 22.15.[3]

5:31 *If I Testify About Myself*

A Witness Does Not Testify About Himself. Tertullian: No one who comes on the authority of another establishes that authority as

[1]LF 43:276, 278**. [2]NPNF 1 14:141-42**. [3]NPNF 1 7:150*.

his own but rather guards against such an understanding, for first must come the support of the one who gives him his authority. Now, [Christ] will not be acknowledged as Son if the Father never called him this. Nor will people believe he is the sent One if no sender gave him a commission. Against Marcion 3.2.[4]

5:32 *Another Bears Witness to Me*

Jesus Hints at the Testimony of John the Baptist. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Since they were about to object to the words pronounced by our Lord about himself: "Your words are not true, nor worthy to be accepted, because you bear testimony about yourself"—since in their argument with him they were about to put forward this objection, our Lord forestalled them by saying, "You must not accept me as true, because I bear testimony to myself: this is what you undoubtedly mean. But you would have the right to say such a thing if I were the only one to bear testimony about myself. But now someone else said other things that were similar to my words about me, and he was a very trustworthy witness." Commentary on John 2.5.31-32.[5]

5:33-34 *John Sent as Witness to the Truth*

The Witness of John. Chrysostom: What Jesus says is like this: I, being God, did not need the witness of John, which is a human witness. And yet, because you listened to him and believe that he is more trustworthy than anyone else, and because you ran to him as to a prophet (for "all the city came out to the Jordan") and, finally, because you have not believed on me even when I performed miracles, therefore I remind you of that witness of his. Homilies on the Gospel of John 40.2.[6]

John Is Trustworthy Because He Was Sent from God. Ephrem the Syrian: If he [our Lord] was not receiving testimony from human beings, why did he go to John to receive testimony from him? John, however, was sent from God: "He who sent us spoke to me."[7] Through John, the Father was testifying about him, just as he [our Lord] said, "Moses also wrote about me," along with other statements. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 13.11.[8]

5:35 *A Burning, Shining Lamp*

The Prophets and Apostles Are Lamps of God. Augustine: All people are lamps because they can both be lighted and extinguished. . . . Only [Christ] is not a lamp. For he is not lighted and extinguished, because "as the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son to have life in himself." Therefore, the apostles, too, are lamps. And they give thanks because they both have been kindled by the light of truth and burn with the Spirit of love, and the oil of God's grace is available to them. If they were not lamps, the Lord would not say to them, "You are the light of the world."[9] For after he said, "You are the light of the world," he shows that they should not think they were such a light as that of which it is said, "It was the true light that enlightens everyone who comes into this world."[10] Tractates on the Gospel of John 23.3.1-2.[11]

John's Light Was Dimming. Ephrem the Syrian: "He [John] was a lamp that was burning," which even as it grew was also passing away, for he was shining in the night so that he might show that the appointed time of the sun's power was fading, and its beams of light were vanishing. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 13.10.[12]

5:36 *The Works Testify That Christ Is Sent by the Father*

The Works Are Evidence of Sonship. Hilary of Poitiers: God the Only Begotten proves

[4]ANF 3:322*. [5]CSCO 4 3:122. [6]NPNF 1 14:145*. [7]See Jn 1:33. [8]CB709:110.. [9]See Mt 5:14. [10]Jn 1:9. [11]FC 79:213-14*. [12]*CB709:108.*

his Sonship by an appeal not only to the name but to the power. The works that he does are evidence that he has been sent by the Father. What, I [Hilary] ask, is the fact that these works prove? They prove that he was sent. That he was sent, in turn, is used as a proof of his Son-like obedience and of his Father's authority. For the works that he does could not possibly be done by any other than the one who is sent by the Father. . . . Open the Gospel volumes and examine the whole range of their content. . . . No testimony of the Father to the Son is given in any of the books other than that he is the Son. So it is nothing short of deception when people now say that this is only a name of adoption, thus making God a liar and names without meaning. On the Trinity 6.27.[13]

Christ Works the Works, and the Father Testifies Through Them. Hilary of Poitiers: Are they blameless, in that they did not know the testimony of the Father who was never heard or seen among them and whose word was not abiding in them? No, for they cannot plead that his testimony was hidden from them. As Christ says, the testimony of his works is the testimony of the Father concerning him. His works testify of him that he was sent of the Father; but the testimony of these works is the Father's testimony. Since, therefore, the working of the Son is the Father's testimony, it follows of necessity that the same nature was operative in Christ, by which the Father testifies of him. So Christ, who does the works, and the Father, who testifies through them, are revealed as possessing one inseparable nature through the birth, for the work that Christ does is shown itself to be the testimony of God concerning him. On the Trinity 9.20.[14]

5:37 *The Father's Voice Unheard, His Form Not Seen*

Anthropomorphic Language and God. Chrysostom: How then did God speak and Moses answered?[15] How did David hear a tongue that he did not know?[16] Did people ever hear the voice of God [speaking out of the midst of the fire], as you [Moses] have heard his voice and seen his shape?[17] Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are said to have seen him, and many others. So what does Christ mean here? He means to impress upon them the philosophical understanding that God has neither voice nor shape but is superior to such modes of speaking about him. For as in saying, "You have never heard his voice," he does not mean to say that he has a voice but that they just cannot hear it. And also, when he says, "Nor have they ever seen his form," no tangible, sensible or visible shape is implied to belong to God. . . . But why, he says, do I bring these things up? I do so because not only have you never heard his voice or seen his shape, but it is not even in your power to assert what you are most proud and assured of: that you have received and kept his commandments. Homilies on the Gospel of John 40.3.[18]

Voice and Form Are Standing in Front of Them. Cyril of Alexandria: The puffed-up Pharisees liked to pretend that the divine Word was with them and in them and that they had come to an advanced level of wisdom. . . . But here they are, rejecting the living and hypostatic[19] Word of God. Their faith was not directed toward him. Instead they dishonored the impress of God the Father and refused to behold his most true form (so to say) through his God-befitting authority and power. For the divine and ineffable nature is in no other way apprehended (so far as it may be) by us than through what it effects and works. This is why Paul directs us to go from the greatness and beauty of the creatures to the proportionately higher contemplation of the Creator.[20] . . . This is why Jesus finds fault with Philip, who thoughtlessly imagined that he could in any other way attain to the contemplation of God the Father. It was in Philip's power, however,

[13]NPNF 2 9:107**. [14]NPNF 2 9:161-62. [15]See Ex 19:19. [16]Ps 81:5. [17]Deut 4:33. [18]NPNF 1 14:146**. [19]A technical term that Cyril often uses to refer to the person of Christ in the Trinity. [20]See Rom 1:20.

to consider Jesus' uncreated image, which shows accurately in himself the One who begat him.[21] Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.2.[22]

5:38 *His Word Does Not Abide in You*

The Word Is the Form of His Father. Athanasius: It is most appropriate that he joins the "Word" to the "form" here to show that the Word of God is himself the image and expression and form of his Father. The Jews who did not receive the one who spoke to them thus did not receive the Word, which is the form of God. This too was who the patriarch Jacob saw when he received a blessing from him and the name of Israel instead of Jacob.[23] . . . And this is he who said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father,"[24] and "I in the Father and the Father in me"[25] and "I and the Father are one."[26] For in this way God is one and so is the faith in the Father and the Son. For even though the Word is God, the Lord our God is one Lord. Discourses Against the Arians 3.25.16.[27]

Scriptures Everywhere Tell Them of Christ. Chrysostom: It was not even in their power to assert what they boasted the most about, that is, that they had received and obeyed God's commands. Therefore he adds, "You do not have his word abiding in you," that is, the commandments, the Law and the Prophets. Although God instituted them, you do not have them. For if the Scriptures everywhere tell you to believe in me and you still do not believe, it is clear that his word has departed from you. "For you do not believe him whom he has sent." Homilies on the Gospel of John 40.3.[28]

5:39 *Search the Scriptures for Christ*

Finding the Father's Testimony. Chrysostom: They might say to him: How, if we have never heard God's voice, has God borne witness to you? And so, Jesus says to them, "Search the Scriptures . . ." meaning that the Father had borne witness of him by the Scriptures. Indeed, he had borne witness at the Jordan and on the mountain [of transfiguration]. . . . But they did not hear the voice on the mountain and did not listen to it at the Jordan. This is why he sends them to the Scriptures, where they would also find the Father's testimony. Homilies on the Gospel of John 40.3.[29]

Do Not Only Read but Also Examine Scripture. Chrysostom: He tells them not to simply "read the Scriptures" but "search the Scriptures." . . .These sayings were not on the surface or out in the open but were hidden very deep like some treasure. Anyone who searches for hidden things, unless they are careful and diligent, will never find the object of their search. This is why he says. . . , "For in them you think you have eternal life," meaning that they did not reap much fruit from the Scriptures, thinking, as they did, that they should be saved by the mere reading of them, without faith. . . . And so, it was with good reason that he said "you think," because they did not actually listen to what the Scripture had to say but merely prided themselves on the bare reading. Homilies on the Gospel of John 41.1.[30]

The Scriptures Contain All the Wisdom of Life. Sahdona: For all the wisdom of life is hidden in the Scriptures. In them we are able to gain knowledge of God and of his creative activity, of his wonderful governance and providence; likewise of his goodness and, at the same time of his righteousness, and, in sum, of his great and mighty power.[31] Anyone who is deprived of a knowledge of the Scriptures cannot withstand the power of God.[32] . . . It is from the Scriptures that we learn how to travel on the road of virtue,

[21]See Jn 14:9. [22]LF 43:300**. [23]See Gen 32:28-29 (32:29-30 LXX). [24]Jn 14:9. [25]Jn 14:11. [26]Jn 10:30. [27]NPNF 2 4:403*. [28]NPNF 1 14:146**. [29]NPNF 1 14:146**. [30]NPNF 1 14:147-48**. [31]See Eph 1:19. [32]He cites Mt 22:29 and our text.

for in them all the fine deeds of the just life are delineated. One cannot see anything without light, for it is light that enables us to see, as it is written, "By light we see light."[33] Similarly, without the light of the Scriptures we are unable to see God, who is light,[34] or his justice, which is filled with light.[35] The effort involved in reading the Scriptures is thus greatly beneficial to us, all the more so since it causes us to become illumined in prayer. For anyone whose soul, after having labored in reading and having been purified by spiritual meditation, is fervent with love for God, will pray in a luminous manner when he turns to prayer and the divine office, and he will recite the psalms without distraction. This is because his mind has labored in meditation on divine providence and so is filled with joy. Book of Perfection 49-51.[36]

5:41-42 *I Do Not Accept Glory from Human Beings*

The Glory They Give Is Useless Without the Love of God. Theodore of Mopsuestia: After he had rebuked with all these words those who did not want to believe in him, and after he had confirmed with different [arguments] those words said about him, he opportunely rejected the foolish conclusion that had followed his words by saying: I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I have used these words not because I want glory from you or because I expect that your faith will be an advantage for me, but so that I might reprove you since you do not have the love of God. And, with the pretext of the love for God, you even eagerly persecute me as if I were vainly or even impiously boasting equality with him. So, I reprove you in order that you might turn to virtue after being rebuked. He then said aptly: *ou lambanō*, that is, "I do not accept" the glory given to me. My nature does not increase in dignity through the glory of people. Commentary on John 2.5.41-42.[37]

5:43 *Jesus Has Come in His Father's Name*

His Coming in the Name of the Lord. Eusebius of Caesarea: Holy Scripture records that this prophecy[38] was fulfilled when our Lord and Savior Christ entered Jerusalem. . . . And the words "blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord" explain the words that follow: "The Lord is God and has appeared to us."[39] It was, then, one and the same Lord God who appeared to them, that is to say, the Word of God. It is he who is therefore blessed, because he came among people in the name of the Lord his Father who sent him. It was therefore to reprove the Jews who disbelieved in him that he said, "I came in the name of my Father, and you received me not. But if one comes in his own name, him will you receive." So the Holy Spirit suitably addressed the opening verses of the psalm not to the Jewish people but to all the nations. Proof of the Gospel 6.8.2-3.[40]

Antichrist Received More Readily Than Christ. Hilary of Poitiers: Jesus comes in the name of the Father, that is, he is not himself the Father and yet is in the same divine nature as the Father. For as Son and God it is natural for him to come in the name of the Father. But then, when another comes in the same name [ironically] he is the one they will receive. And he is one from whom people will expect glory and to whom they will give glory in return, though he will pretend to have come in the name of the Father. By this, doubtless, is signified the antichrist, glorying in his false use of the Father's name. He is the one they will glorify, and they will be glorified by him. But the glory of him who alone is God they will not seek. On the Trinity 9.22.[41]

[33]Ps 36:9 (35:10 LXX). [34]See 1 Jn 1:5. [35]See Ps 37:6 (36:6 LXX). [36]CS 101:222-23*. [37]CSCO 4 3:125-26. [38]Ps 117-118 (116-117 LXX). [39]Ps 118:27 (117:27 LXX). [40]*POG* 2:8*. See also *Proof of the Gospel* 9.18 (*POG* 2:189). [41]NPNF 2 9:162*. See also Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.25.4 (ANF 1:554).

Those Who Follow Antichrist Act According to Inclination. Theodore of Mopsuestia: I [Jesus says] refer what I say and do to the Father, because my glory is the glory of my Father. Therefore I lead you to the Father and do not offer a pretext for your unbelief. But he [i.e., antichrist] will come and will not mention the Father. Instead he will do all his works for his own glory. He will tell everyone that he is god by showing himself to be great and admirable before all. And then you will take refuge in him, and you will stay firm in your resolve without resorting to the pretext of your love for God or the intervention of the Father. And from all that you do now and you will do then, it is evident that you act according to your inclination to evil. Commentary on John 2.5.43.[42]

5:44 *The Only Worthwhile Glory*

Antichrist Promises Ease. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Since I, he says, lead you to God without promising anything magnificent in this life, you run away from me because my words are difficult. But the other one shows all his glory in this life by promising great security and dignity to those who believe in him. And so you, enticed by the greed of this life, take refuge in him. Commentary on John 2.5.44.[43]

Hunting for Honor Among People Comes Up Short. Cyril of Alexandria: He accuses the Pharisees of a love for power and of prizing honors from people. He is covertly hinting that it is exceedingly inadvisable to put the diseases of their own soul[44] on God, who can by no means have anything to do with disease. He goes on to say that they, held fast by an empty kind of glory, thereby lose the fairest prize, meaning faith in him. Paul speaks clearly of this too when he says, "For if I were yet pleasing people, I should not be Christ's servant."[45] It is almost always necessarily the case that those who hunt for honors from people fail when it comes to the glory that comes from above and from the only God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.2.[46]

5:45 *Moses Is Your Accuser*

Jesus Uses Their Own Authorities. Chrysostom: See how he takes away all of their excuses: . . . You maintain that you believe in Moses in what you dare to do against me, he says. I, on the contrary, show that this is the worst kind of misbelief in Moses you can think of. I am so far from opposing that law that he who shall accuse you is none other than the man who gave you the law. In other words, he says now of Moses what he had said of the Scriptures above, "In them you think you have eternal life." And so here he speaks of Moses as someone "in whom you trust." Jesus is always answering them from their own authorities. Homilies on the Gospel of John 41.2.[47]

5:46-47 *Moses Wrote About Christ*

In Every Way Christ Fulfills Moses' Prophecy. Chrysostom: Someone might say, "What do you have to do with Moses when you broke the very sabbath that he ordained we should keep? How then does Moses accuse us? And why should we believe on someone else who comes in his own name? All these assertions you make have no evidence to back them up." Now in truth all these points are proved above. "For," [Christ would reply] "since it is acknowledged that I came from God by my works, by the voice of John and the testimony of the Father, it is certain that Moses too would condemn you." For Moses had said that if any one shall come doing miracles, leading people to God and foretelling the future with certainty,[48] you must obey him. Now Christ had done all this. Homilies on the Gospel of John 41.2.[49]

---

[42]CSCO 4 3:128. [43]CSCO 4 3:129. [44]Pride. [45]Gal 1:10. [46]LF 43:303-4**. [47]NPNF 1 14:149**. [48]See Deut 13:1, although there they were commanded to put the prophet to death if he was a false prophet. [49]NPNF 1 14:149*.

Christ's Words. Irenaeus: Christ here indicates in the clearest possible way that the writings of Moses are his words. If, then, this is the case with Moses, then it is also beyond doubt that the words of the other prophets are his words as well. Against Heresies 4.2.3.[50]

The Mediator Gave the Law to Moses. Hilary of Poitiers: Moses, indeed, will refute you with the whole volume of the law, ordained through angels, which he received by the hand of the Mediator. Enquire whether he who gave the law was not true God, for the Mediator was the Giver. And was it not to meet God that Moses led the people out to the mountain? Was it not God who came down onto the mountain? Or was it, perhaps, only by a fiction or an adoption, and not by right of nature, that he who did all this bore the name of God? . . . In your eyes is he not God just because he addressed you through the weak faculties of a man so that you might hear and live? On the Trinity 5.23.[51]

The Kernel Is Hidden in the Husk. Augustine: But just as in barley the kernel is hidden in the husk, so Christ is hidden under the wraps of the mysteries of the law. Like bread, those mysteries are expounded and expanded. Sermon 130.1.[52]

[50]ANF 1:464**. [51]NPNF 2 9:91-92*. [52]*WSA* 3 4:310.

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND: A FOURTH SIGN JOHN 6:1-15

Overview: John recounts the miracle of the bread, one of the only miracles to be recorded by all four Evangelists. But John is most concerned with bringing out the doctrinal content (Theodore). Christ leaves Jerusalem in order to calm the opposition and evade those who would persecute him by going to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (Cyril of Alexandria). The crowd follows Jesus, motivated by the miracles rather than his teaching, which may explain the lack of miracle accounts in John during this intervening period. In a practice worthy of emulation, Jesus retires alone with his disciples and without the crowds and confusion (Chrysostom).

This account occurs one year before the passion of our Lord, coinciding with the Passover that followed shortly after the beheading of John the Baptist (Bede). Jesus does not go up for the feast because he was quietly annulling the old law rather than forcing a direct confrontation (Chrysostom). In one of the aspects of the account where there are some discrepancies with the other Evangelists (Augustine, Chrysostom), Jesus asks Philip about the lack of food so that later on Philip might remember the situation and confess the miracle Jesus performed (Chrysostom). He tests Philip so that he would learn that everything is to be entrusted to God (Theodore). In the end, Christ's feeding of the multitude is an example for all of us to be bold in believing that with God all things are possible (Cyril of Alexandria).

Despite the disciples' skepticism, the one who created the universe is surely able to create abundance from five loaves and two fish (Romanus). The number of the five loaves as coarser food suggests the five books of Moses, whereas the more delicate two fish suggest the teaching of the apostles and Evangelists (Cyril of Alexandria). A related prophetic reading is that the kernel of barley (Christ) was hidden in the husk (Old Testament) but when broken becomes multiplied, while the two fish symbolize the priests and kings whose roles are fulfilled in Christ (Augustine). There was much grass at this time of year during the month of Nisan, when the weather was getting warmer (Theodore). The five thousand fed foreshadows the five thousand fed in faith mentioned in Acts 4 (Hilary). Unlike in many of his other miracles, Jesus prays first as he prepares to feed them, in order to show his solidarity with the Father and the Spirit, who were also present with him in his first creative act (Romanus), and to teach us that when we begin our meals we ought to give thanks to God as well (Chrysostom).

The miracle was most likely not evident to those present at the time when it occurred but only realized afterwards (Hilary). What happened was beyond anything the five senses could comprehend (Clement). The creator of grain multiplies those grains as though they were seeds committed not to the earth but to his own fertile creative hands, which bring life. In the breaking of the loaves, the bread is multiplied, just as the Old Testament was broken open by the presence of Christ (Augustine). As the broken bread was scattered on the mountains and then was gathered together to become one, so may the church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into the one kingdom of God (Didache). The leftover bread in this miracle demonstrates that God always provides more than we need (Ephrem). The gift of bread Christ gave that day through his apostles continues in the life of the church even now and until the end of the world (Origen). Christ's miracle of superabundance has ancient precedent in Elijah (Tertullian). We too should learn to be generous with the gifts God has given us, since God can make much out of even a little (Cyril of Alexandria).

After Jesus performed the miracle, the people realize that *the* prophet who would be like Moses had come into the world (Ephrem). Yet this miracle is really no greater than the miracles that occur every day through God's preservation and care of his creation (Augustine). When the people saw the miracle, they sought to make him king because they were so enamored with earthly power; but Christ, who despised worldly dignity

(Chrysostom), knew that he was already a king (Augustine). As his followers, we too will flee from worldly glory (Cyril of Alexandria) since our power does not lie in political power but in weakness (Ambrose). Jesus escapes from the crowd to a mountain to pray, teaching us that whenever escape is necessary, so is prayer (Augustine).

6:1 *The Other Side of the Sea of Galilee*

John's Doctrinal Perspective. Theodore of Mopsuestia: From here the evangelist passes to the account of the miracle of the bread, which all the other evangelists related as well. However John reports this episode because of the doctrine that was drawn by our Lord from it and that was omitted by the others. He believed that this (doctrine) needed especially to be related in his narrative. Commentary on John 3.6.1.[1]

Jesus Evades His Persecutors for a Time. Cyril of Alexandria: [If] our enemies persecute us, it is possible for us to behave well towards them by leaving them for a time, even when there is no harm in remaining. By evading their attacks and avoiding their rage, we may find that their anger abates and thus we may undercut the boldness of their arrogance. . . . To do the work of love then is not necessarily enduring those who wish us evil, nor to remain among one's enemies, causing them to become even more bitter and angry because they are unable to soften our opposition. Love then, as Paul says, "does not insist on its own way,"[2] and this was [certainly true] in Christ. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.4.[3]

6:2 *The Multitude and the Signs*

Signs Motivate the Masses, Not Teaching. Chrysostom: Though favored with such teaching as Jesus had done, they were influenced less by this than by the miracles—a sign of the low level of faith they had. For miracles, it says, are not for believers but for unbelievers.[4] Those described by Matthew did not act this way; rather, he says, they "were astonished at his doctrine because he taught as one having authority."[5] Homilies on the Gospel of John 42.1.[6]

The Lack of Miracle Accounts. Chrysostom: Observe, in a whole year, the evangelist has told us of no miracles of Christ, except of his healing of the paralytic and the nobleman's son. His purpose was not to enumerate them all (which would have been impossible), but to record the great principal acts of our Lord. Homilies on the Gospel of John 42.1.[7]

6:3 *Jesus Went Up on the Mountain and Sat Down with His Disciples*

A Mountain Vantage Point. Chrysostom: He went up onto the mountain because of the miracle he was going to do. The disciples alone ascended with him which implies that the people who stayed behind were at fault for not following. He went up to the mountain too as a lesson to us to retire from the tumult and confusion of the world. For solitude is appropriate for the study of wisdom. Jesus often went up alone onto a mountain in order to pray, even spending the night there. He did this in order to teach us that the one who will come most near to God must be free from all disturbance and must seek times and places away from all the confusion. Homilies on the Gospel of John 42.1.[8]

6:4 *The Passover Feast Was at Hand*

One Year Before the Passion. Bede: Matthew and Mark make mention of the murder of John [the Baptist] in connection with the miracle of the bread while John here mentions it was near

[1]CSCO 4 3:130. [2]1 Cor 13:5. [3]LF 43:315**. [4]Chrysostom has in mind here 1 Cor 14:22 which actually deals with the gift of tongues. [5]Mt 7:28-29. [6]NPNF 1 14:151**. [7]NPNF 1 14:151*. [8]NPNF 1 14:151**.

the day of the festival of Pascha of the Jews. It is evident that the festival of the Passover here coincides with the beheading of John the Baptist, and that a year later [the evangelist] returns again to the time of the Pascha when the mystery of the Lord's passion was completed. Exposition on the Gospel of Mark 2.6.[9]

Jesus' Reticence to Go Up to Jerusalem. Chrysostom: Why doesn't he go up to the feast, some might ask, especially when everyone else is pressing towards Jerusalem? Why instead does he go into Galilee, and even at that, he does not go alone but takes his disciples with him and proceeds to Capernaum? He did this because he was quietly annulling the law, taking occasion from the wickedness of the Jews. Homilies on the Gospel of John 42.1.[10]

6:5 *How Are We to Buy Bread?*

Discrepancies with John's Account? Augustine: If our Lord, according to the narrative of John, on seeing the multitude, asked Philip (having in view to test him), where they could buy food for them, it is difficult at first to see how it can be true, according to the other account, that the disciples first told our Lord to send away the multitude.[11] . . . There is also the fact that our Lord replied, "They need not depart; you give them something to eat."[12] . . . We must understand then it was after saying this that our Lord saw the multitude and said to Philip what John had related, which has been omitted by the rest. Harmony of the Gospels 2.46.96.[13]

Two Different Accounts? Chrysostom: [Or], the two are entirely different accounts. Homilies on the Gospel of John 42.1.[14]

The Greatness of the Miracle. Chrysostom: Jesus spoke the same way to Moses in the Old Testament, for he did not bring about a sign until he had asked him, "What is that in your hand?" Because things that happen unexpectedly and all at once are liable to throw us into forgetfulness of what happened previously, Jesus first involved Philip in a confession of the present circumstances. In this way, when the astonishment comes upon him, afterwards he might be unable to drive away the memory of what he had confessed, and thus might learn by comparison the greatness of the miracle, which in fact takes place in this instance. Homilies on the Gospel of John 42.1.[15]

6:6 *This He Said to Test Him*

Question Meant to Instill Doubt. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Through his question to Philip, he intended to expose his disciples to doubt, so that they might observe more clearly the miracle he would do. Even though he appears to speak to one disciple only, his words concerned all for the common benefit. By explaining the purpose of that question the evangelist added: "He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do." "To test him," he says, but he means, rather, to provide the proof. Indeed, he first kept Philip in doubt and difficulty because of the shortage of food, but then, when Philip would see the miracle accomplished, he would learn that everything must always be committed to God and that he should never feel embarrassed because of any shortage. Commentary on John 3.6.5.[16]

Weakness of Faith. Cyril of Alexandria: Smallness of faith is the worst sickness and surpasses all evil. If God works or promises to do anything, then let it be believed in simple faith. Just because we are powerless to accomplish anything, we should not let God be accused by our inability to understand how he will accomplish things beyond our understanding. . . . What is then beyond our comprehension is received by

[9]CCL 120:512. [10]NPNF 1 14:151*. [11]Mt 14:15. [12]Mt 14:16. [13]NPNF 1 6:149**. [14]NPNF 1 14:151**. [15]NPNF 1 14:151*. [16]CSCO 4 3:130-31.

faith and not by investigation. Therefore, just as one who believes is admired, so also one who doubts is not free from blame. The Savior himself testifies about this when he says, "He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already."[17] Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.4.[18]

6:7-9 *Divine Provision in Five Barley Loaves and Two Fish*

The Creator of the Universe Will Provide. Romanus Melodus:

"Master, we can find only five barley loaves;
No one of us brought anything into the desert,
But a child is here who has them.
O Lover of man, no other resource is possible for us.
For an enormous and boundless number of people, O Man of pity,
How can these five loaves be sufficient?
In addition, he has two fishes.
But hurry and nourish them, since Thou art
The heavenly bread of immortality."

When Christ heard these words of His disciples,
He answered them in this way: "You are mistaken if you do not know
That I am the Creator of the universe; I provide for the world;
I now know clearly what these people need;
I see the desert and that the sun is setting;
Indeed I arranged the setting of the sun;
I understand the distress of the crowd which is here;
I know what I have in mind to do for them.
I myself shall cure their hunger, for I am
The heavenly bread of immortality. . . .

"Even though you consider carefully, can you as mere men secure nourishment,
Or can you, though you are worried, feed the people?
Or, then, if you cannot feed them, have you the power to keep silent?
I, alone, as Creator take thought for all.
I exist as good, God before the centuries.
And I provide every kind of food for all people;[19]
But you, on beholding the multitude, are worried,
And you do not consider the One who provides abundantly,
As I am set before all, offering
The heavenly bread of immortality.

"I know in advance what you are thinking and what you are saying to each other,
As you see the people, the means of provision, and the hour.
You are reasoning, 'Who will feed the entire crowd in the desert?'
Well, know clearly, friends, who I am.
I fed Israel in the desert;[20]
I gave them bread from Heaven;
In a region without water, I made water to flow from a rock;[21] . . .
Since I am
The heavenly bread of immortality.

Kontakion on the Multiplication of Loaves 13.12-17.[22]

The Significance of Five Loaves and Two Fish. Cyril of Alexandria: The five barley loaves signify the five books of Moses, that is, the whole law which gives as it were a coarser type of food. . . . But the fish signify good food attained through the fishermen, that is, the more delicate books of Christ's disciples. Within the latter, there are two distinct types, the preaching of the apostles and the proclamation of the evangelists, which shine forth among us. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.4.[23]

The Husk of the Pentateuch Fulfilled in Christ the Kernel. Augustine: To pro-

[17]Jn 3:18. [18]LF 43:324-25**. [19]Ps 136:25 (135:25 LXX). [20]Ex 16:4. [21]Ps 78:16; Ex 17:6-7. [22]*KRBM* 1:132-33*. [23]LF 43:329**.

vide a brief explanation: the five loaves are understood as the five books of Moses; rightly they are not wheat but barley because they belong to the Old Testament. For you know that barley was created in such a way that one can scarcely get to its kernel. For this kernel is clothed with a covering of husk, and this husk is tenacious and adhering, so that it is stripped off with effort. Such is the letter of the Old Testament, clothed with the coverings of carnal mysteries; but if one gets to its kernel, it feeds and satisfies.

And so a boy was carrying five loaves and two fishes. If we should seek to know who this boy was, perhaps he was the people of Israel, carrying the loaves and fish with a childlike understanding and not eating of them itself. For those things that it was carrying, when kept shut, were a burden, but when opened, were food. Moreover, the two fish seem to us to signify those two sublime personages in the Old Testament who were anointed to make holy and rule the people, the priest and king. Tractates on the Gospel of John 24.5.1-2.[24]

6:10 *Abundant Grass, Abundant People*

The Season. Theodore of Mopsuestia: "Now there was a great deal of grass in the place," and therefore the place where they sat down was pleasing, and the weather was good. It was Nisan (more or less April), when the earth usually becomes adorned with growing weeds, especially in those regions with hotter weather. He also had indicated this above by saying, "Now the Passover was near." Commentary on John 3.6.10.[25]

Five Thousand Fed in John and Acts. Hilary of Poitiers: And so, taking the loaves and fishes, the Lord looked up to heaven, then blessed and broke them, giving thanks to the Father that, after the law and the prophets, he has himself become the evangelical bread. And when he had commanded the people to sit down on the grass, not to lie prone on the earth, but to sit upheld by the law, each one spread his own good works, like the grass of the earth, under him. The bread is also given to the apostles, because it is through them the gifts of the divine grace are to be given. Then the people ate of the five loaves and two fishes and were filled. And of the fragments of the bread and of the fishes, after all who had sat down were satisfied, there remained over enough to fill twelve baskets: that is, the hunger of the multitude is satisfied by the word of God coming to them from the teaching of the law and the prophets. And the abundance of the divine goodness, kept in reserve for the people of the Gentiles, has overflowed from the source of eternal food unto the filling of the twelve apostles.

And the number of those who ate is, we find, the same as that of those who were to believe. For, as we learn from the book of the Acts, out of the numbers of the people of Israel five thousand believed.[26] For, the miracle of these things extends even to the measure of the reason that underlies them. The bread together with the fishes broken for the feeding of the people increased to the need of the number of people who believed, and to the number of apostles chosen to be filled with heavenly graces. The quantity conformed to the number, and the number to the quantity. On Matthew 14.11.[27]

6:11 *When He Had Given Thanks*

Be Fruitful and Multiply. Romanus Melodus:

Christ had brought to Him[28] the five loaves of bread,
And straightway, lifting His eyes to the Father, He said:[29]
"I am doing Thy deeds; for I am Thy Son;
For in the beginning, I created the whole world

[24]FC 79:234-35**. [25]CSCO 4 3:132. Theodore also posits that the disciples were afraid of malcontents among the crowd. [26]Acts 4:4. [27]*SSGF* 2:120*; PL 9:1000-1001. [28]I.e., the Father. [29]Not as a prayer for power but as an acknowledgement of his relationship to the Father and the Spirit. Basil of Seleucia takes a similar approach. See PG 85:360B-365C.

Together with Thee and the Holy Spirit; for I am
The heavenly bread of immortality."

Behold how the masters, the servants of Christ, were arranged and attended
The Servant, Jesus; and they found Him at once.
For the Lord blessed the five loaves of bread,
Speaking to them as follows in spiritual fashion:
"Grow and multiply perceptibly,[30]
And nourish now all who are assembled here."
And immediately the loaves obeyed the Lord;
They multiplied invisibly
As Christ spoke to them, for He is
The heavenly bread of immortality.

Kontakion on the Multiplication of Loaves 13.19-20.[31]

Thanksgiving before the Meal. Chrysostom: But why did he not pray when he was about to restore the paralytic, nor when he was raising the dead, or bridling the sea, while he does so here over the loaves? It was to show that when we begin our meals, we ought to give thanks to God. He does not do this because he needs to, but to show in both lesser and greater things it is fitting. Homilies on the Gospel of John 42.3.[32]

Miracle Not Evident While Happening. Hilary of Poitiers: Five loaves are then set before the multitude, and broken. While the apostles are dividing them, a succession of newly created portions passes—they cannot tell how—through their hands. The loaf which they are dividing does not grow smaller and yet their hands are continually full of the pieces. The speed of the process baffles the sight. You follow with the eye a hand full of portions, and in the meantime you see that the contents of the other hand are not diminished. And all the while the heap of pieces grows. The carvers are busy at their task, the eaters hard at work at theirs. The hungry are satisfied and the fragments fill twelve baskets. Neither sight nor any of the other senses can discover how such an amazing miracle happened. What did not exist was created; what we see passes our understanding. It only remains for us to believe that God can do all things. On the Trinity 3.6.[33]

Going Beyond the Five Senses. Clement of Alexandria: So very mystically the five loaves are broken by the Savior, and fill the crowd of the listeners. For great is the crowd that keep to the things of the senses, as if they were the only things in existence. "Cast your eyes round, and see," says Plato, "that none of the uninitiated listen."[34] Such are they who think that nothing else exists but what they can hold firmly with their hands; but do not admit as in the department of existence, actions and processes of generation, and the whole of the unseen. For such are those who keep by the five senses. But the knowledge of God is a thing inaccessible to the ears and other organs of the senses with this kind of people. Stromateis 5.6.[35]

The Creator of Grain Multiplies It. Augustine: He therefore created as God creates. For, just as he multiplies the produce of the fields from a few grains, from that same source of power he multiplied in his hands the five loaves. There was power, indeed, in the hands of Christ. And those five loaves were like seeds, not indeed committed to the earth, but multiplied by him who made the earth. Tractates on the Gospel of John 24.1.[36]

In Breaking, Loaves Are Multiplied. Augustine: And he who was signified through them [i.e., the loaves] in mystery now came at last. He came now at last who was shown by the kernel of the barley but was hidden by the husk of the barley. He came, himself, one person carry-

[30]By recalling God's promises to Adam and Noah, "Be fruitful and multiply," Romanus underlines the power of God to generate life. [31]*KRBM* 1:135*. [32]NPNF 1 14:153*. [33]NPNF 2 9:63**. [34]Plato *Theaetetus* 155. [35]ANF 2:452*. [36]NPNF 1 7:158*.

ing both personages in himself, priest and king. He is priest through the victim which he offered for us to God—himself. He is king because we are ruled by him. And those things that were being carried concealed [i.e., barley husks] are opened. Thanks be to him. He fulfilled through himself what was promised in the Old Testament. And he ordered the loaves[37] to be broken; by breaking they were multiplied.

Nothing is truer. For those five books of Moses, how many books have they made when they are explained, as if by breaking [them], that is, by discussing [them]? Tractates on the Gospel of John 24.5.3-4.[38]

6:12 *Gather the Pieces That Are Left Over*

Scattered Bread, Gathered Church. Didache: Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks as follows. . . . concerning the broken bread: "We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever. Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountain and then was gathered together and became one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever." Didache 9.1-4.[39]

God Always Provides More Than We Need. Ephrem the Syrian: But it was not because he had the ability to multiply it [the loaves of bread and the fish] that he did thus multiply them, but rather because there would then be enough food for those who would eat them. His miracle, therefore, was not in proportion to his own power, but rather in proportion to the hunger of those who were hungry. For if his miracle were to be proportional to his power, there would be no way to measure how much his power overcame. Rather, his miracle was in proportion to the hunger of thousands, and it surpassed the number of the twelve baskets. In the case of all artisans, the desire of those who seek their services is greater that the ability of the artisans, for the artisans are unable to work in line with the desires of those who need them. For God, however, his activity surpasses [the desires of] those who need him. [He said], "Gather up the pieces so that absolutely nothing may be lost," so that it not seem concerning him that he had made use of an apparition; but when a remainder for a day or two was left, they might believe that he had truly acted, and that this was not some vacuous vision. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 12.4.[40]

6:13 *They Filled Twelve Baskets*

The Gift of Bread That Keeps on Giving. Origen: In the Psalms it is written of Joseph, "His hands had served in baskets."[41] And the disciples of Jesus, the Twelve, I believe, gathered up twelve baskets of the remainder of the broken bread. These baskets were not half filled but full. And with the disciples of Jesus, as the teachers of the multitudes, now and until the end of the world, remain the twelve baskets of fragments of the living Bread that the multitudes could not eat. Commentary on Matthew 11.2.[42]

Antecedents of the Miracle. Tertullian: Such was the greatness of his miracle that he willed the slender supply of food not only to be enough but even to prove superabundant. Here he followed ancient precedent. For in the same way during the famine in Elijah's time, the scanty and final meal of the widow of Zarephath was multiplied by the blessing of the prophet through-out the period of the famine. . . . O Christ, even in your novelties you are old! Against Marcion 4.21.[43]

Christ Multiplies Our Good Works. Cyril of Alexandria: Initially the disciples were reluctant to feed the hungry, but seeing this, the Savior gave to them in abundance from the

---

[37]The five loaves symbolize the five books of Moses. [38]FC 79:235**. [39]*AF* 259-61. [40]CB709:78. [41]Ps 81:6 (80:7 LXX). [42]*SSGF* 2:111*; PG 13:908. [43]ANF 3:381*.

fragments. This teaches us as well, that we, by expending a little for the glory of God, shall receive richer grace according to the saying of Christ, "a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap."[44] Therefore, we must not be slothful regarding the communion of love toward our brothers and sisters but rather put away from us, as far as possible, the cowardice and fear that lead to inhospitality. Thus we might be confirmed in hope through steadfast faith in the power of God to multiply even our smallest acts of goodness. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.4.[45]

6:14 *The Prophet Who Is to Come into the World*

A Prophet Like Moses. Ephrem the Syrian: Thus, when they were satisfied, they saw that he had fed them in the wilderness, as Moses [had done] with prayer, and they cried out, saying, "This is the prophet about whom it was said that he is coming into the world." They were repeating the [prophecy] of Moses that "The Lord will raise up a prophet for you," not someone ordinary, but rather "like me,"[46] who will fill you with bread in the desert; "like me," he walked on the sea,[47] and appeared in the cloud.[48] He set his church free from circumcision, and he appointed John, the virgin, in place of Joshua son of Nun. He entrusted Mary, his church, to him,[49] as Moses his flock to Joshua,[50] so that this [prophecy] "like me" would be fulfilled. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 12.5.[51]

Everyday Miracles No Less Miraculous. Augustine: The divine substance is not visible to the eye, and the miracles of the divine government of the world and ordering of the whole creation are overlooked because of their constancy. . . . Because of this, God has reserved for himself acts that are above and beyond the established course and order of nature that he does at suitable times. He does this so that those who overlooked the daily course of nature might be roused to wonder by the sight of what was different from—though not at all greater than—what they were used to. The government of the world is certainly a greater miracle than satisfying the hunger of five thousand with five loaves; and yet no one wonders at this. The miracle excited wonder, not from any real superiority in it but because it was rare. . . . But it would be wrong to gather no more than this from Christ's miracles. . . . Let us understand that the Lord on the mount is the Word on high. . . . He saw the multitude and knew they were hungry, and so he mercifully fed them not only in virtue of his goodness but also of his power. For what could mere goodness do when there was not even enough bread to feed the hungry crowd? If power had not accompanied goodness, the crowd would have remained fasting and hungry. In short, the disciples, hungry themselves, also wanted to feed the multitudes, but they did not have the wherewithal to feed them. Tractates on the Gospel of John 24.1-3.[52]

6:15 *They Attempt to Force Kingship*

Christ Despised Worldly Dignity. Chrysostom: Wonderful! How great is the tyranny of gluttony, how great the fickleness of people's minds! No longer do they vindicate the law, no longer do they care for the violation of the sabbath, and no longer are they zealous for God. All such considerations are thrown aside when their bellies have been filled. He was a prophet in their eyes, and they were about to choose him for a king. But Christ flees. Why? To teach us to despise worldly dignities and to show us that he needed nothing on earth. For the one who chose all the ordinary things of life, such as mother, house, city, nurture and clothing, would not afterwards be made illustrious by things on earth. Homilies on the Gospel of John 42.3.[53]

---

[44]Lk 6:38. [45]LF 43:330**. [46]Deut 18:15. [47]See Mt 14:25-31. [48]See Mt 17:5. [49]See Jn 19:25-27. [50]See Deut 31:7-8. [5]CB709:78-80. [52]NPNF 1 7:158-59**. [53]NPNF 1 14:153*.

He Is Already a King. Augustine: Yet he who shrank from being made a king, was a king [already]; not made king by people but one who would bestow a kingdom on people. . . . For he ever reigns with the Father, in that he is the Son of God, the Word of God, the Word by which all things were made. The prophets had foretold his kingdom. Christ, by being made man, made the believers in him Christians. There will consequently be a kingdom of Christians that at present is being gathered together, being prepared and purchased by the blood of Christ. And this kingdom will be made manifest after the judgment when the glory of his saints shall be revealed. . . . The disciples, however, and the multitude who believed in him thought that he had come to reign immediately, and so they would have taken him by force to make him a king, seeking to anticipate his time, which he kept secret. Tractates on the Gospel of John 25.2.[54]

Flee from Worldly Glory. Cyril of Alexandria: When Christ flees from those who want to give him honor and refuses that highest earthly prize of a kingdom, . . . he teaches us that it is unseemly for those who pursue divine grace and thirst for everlasting glory to seek after worldly greatness. We must then forego the love of glory, the sister and neighbor of arrogance, residing not far from its borders. Let us have nothing to do with illustrious honor in this present life which is hurtful. Let us rather seek after a holy humility giving preference to one another. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.4.[55]

Our Power Is Not Political Power but Weakness. Ambrose: Under the Old Testament, imperial power was bestowed by priests, not despotically claimed, and it is commonly said that emperors aspired to the priesthood rather than priests to the imperial power. Christ fled lest he be made a king. We have a power of our own. The power of the priest is weakness. He [Paul] said, "When I am weak, then I am strong."[56] Letter 60 (to Marcellina).[57]

Whenever Escape Is Necessary, So Is Prayer. Augustine: Indeed our Lord teaches us here that whenever escape is necessary, there is an even greater necessity for prayer. Harmony of the Gospels 2.47.100.[58]

[54]NPNF 1 7:160-61**. [55]LF 43:333**. [56]2 Cor 12:10. [57]FC 26:373-74. [58]NPNF 1 6:150**.

Walking on the Water: A Fifth Sign to the Disciples John 6:16-24

Overview: In the account of the walking on the water that follows, we again notice some slight discrepancies between John's account and other accounts (Augustine, Chrysostom). In John's account Jesus is trying to diffuse the anticipation surrounding him because of his miracle by sending the disciples on ahead in the boat as decoys. They encounter darkness and a storm that take away any navigational ability. But despite the darkness and the billowing waves, the real danger is that Jesus is not with them—a hazard for anyone caught in the storms of life (Cyril of Alexandria).

This storm, in many ways, typifies the danger the church and its members find themselves in (Augustine), but it is always best to meet those storms with prayer (Isaiah). Christ does not immediately come to his disciples' aid but waits until they are far away from the shore and in the midst of the waves of affliction that beset them (Cyril of Alexandria).The one who is "I AM" then comes to them and identifies himself to them (Bede). He brings immediate calm without even getting in the boat and performs a further miracle in bringing the boat to the shore in an instant when it had been in the middle of the lake (Theodore). His command over water was even greater than that of Moses, but the people still would not believe, despite sufficient evidence to infer the miracle had taken place (Chrysostom).

6:16 *At Evening, Jesus' Disciples Went to the Sea*

John Records the Disciples' Action. Augustine: There is no inconsistency between Matthew and John. Matthew[1] has told us first how Jesus commanded his disciples to embark in the little ship and to go before him to the other side of the lake until he sent the multitudes away, and then he informs us that after the multitudes were sent away [Jesus] went up into a mountain alone to pray. John mentions first that he departed to a mountain alone and then proceeds to say, "And when it became late, his disciples came down to the sea; and when they had entered into a ship, etc." For who will not perceive that in recapitulating the facts, John has spoken of something as actually done at a later point by the disciples that Jesus had already charged them to do before his own departure to the mountain? Harmony of the Gospels 2.47.100.[2]

Two Different Accounts? Chrysostom: This miracle seems to me to be a different one from the one given in Matthew,[3] and that it is different is clear for many reasons since he often repeats the same miracle in order to impress it on people's minds and to receive them with great faith. . . . There they do not receive him into the ship immediately, and here they do. Also, there the storm lasts for some time, whereas here as soon as he speaks, there is a calm. Homilies on the Gospel of John 43.1.[4]

Jesus Diffuses Speculation of Kingship. Cyril of Alexandria: In order, then, that he might seem to have sailed away and thus diffuse the intensity of those who were looking for him, he orders the disciples to leave before him; but he stays, providing the opportunity for the next miracle. For his primary concern was to use every occasion to confirm the mind of the apostles in their faith toward him. . . . And so, when evening

[1]Mt 14:23-33. [2]NPNF 1 6:150**. [3]Mt 14:22-33. [4]NPNF 1 14:155-56**.

came and enough time had passed so that those who were seeking him gave up, the choir of holy disciples goes down to the sea and began to sail away immediately, obeying their God and teacher in everything without delay. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.4.[5]

6:17-18 *Jesus Was Not with Them*

The Danger of Being Without Jesus in a Storm. Cyril of Alexandria: The circumstances of their journey drive the disciples to a more intense search for the Savior. For the deep darkness of the night troubles them, hovering like smoke on the raging waves and taking away any ability for navigation. The fierce winds, riding on the waves with a rushing sound that raises the billows high above their heads, had to trouble them more than a little bit. Yes, and through all of this, John records, "Jesus was not yet with them." This was the real danger, and Christ's absence from these voyagers was making their fear grow more and more.

Those who are not with Jesus are in a fierce tempest of a storm. They are cut off from him or at least seem to be absent from him because they have departed from his holy laws. Because of their sin they are separated from the one who is able to save. If then it is overwhelming to be in such spiritual darkness, if it is oppressive to be swamped by the bitter sea of pleasures, let us then receive Jesus. For this is what will deliver us from dangers and from death in sin. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.4.[6]

The Church in the Storm. Augustine: He fled alone to the mountain—the first begotten from the dead—because he has ascended above all the heavens and is interceding for us.[7] . . . But while he was above what were the disciples enduring in the ship below? For that ship prefigured the church while he is on high. . . .

While they were sailing to [Capernaum], John tells us what happened to them. It became dark and Jesus had not come to them. It was right that John said it was dark, because the light [Jesus] had not yet come to them. As the end of the world draws near, errors increase, terrors multiply, iniquity abounds and infidelity escalates. Light, again, is love according to John. Whoever hates his brother is in darkness.[8] . . . The waves and storms and winds then that agitate the ship, are the clamors of hurtful speech and love waxing cold. . . . Nevertheless the wind, and storm, and waves, and darkness were not able to stop and sink the vessel. For the one who endures to the end shall be saved. . . .

And how does Jesus come to the disciples? He comes walking upon the waves, keeping all the swellings of the world under his feet, pressing down all of humanity's pride. And so it continues, so long as time endures, so long as the ages roll. Tribulations increase, all these swell and mount up: Jesus passes on treading upon the waves. And yet, so great are the tribulations that even those who have trusted in Jesus and who strive to persevere to the end greatly fear lest they fail. . . . But they open the gospel, they open the Scriptures and find all these things there foretold; that this is the Lord's doing. He tramples down the heights of the world that he may be glorified by the humble. Tractates on the Gospel of John 25.4-7.[9]

In the Storm of This Life, We Need Prayer. Isaiah of Scete: Like a pilot steering a boat through the waves, one should hold to the course, guided by grace. Keeping his attention fixed within himself, he should commune with God in stillness, guarding his thoughts from distraction and his intellect from curiosity.

In storms and squalls we need a pilot, and in this present life we need prayer, for we are susceptible to the provocations of our thoughts, both good and bad. If our thought is full of devotion and love of God, it rules over the passions. On Guarding the Intellect 23-24.[10]

6:19-20 *Do Not Be Afraid*

[5]LF 43:336-37*. [6]LF 43:337-38**. [7]Rom 8:34. [8]1 Jn 2:11. [9]NPNF 1 7:161-62**. [10]*TP* 1:27.

Divine Help Is Ours. Cyril of Alexandria: Christ does not appear to those in the boat immediately after they set sail or at the onset of danger but only when they are far away from the shore. For the grace of our Savior does not come to us when our tribulations begin but when our fear is at its height and the danger shows itself to be great—when we are found, so to say, in the midst of the waves of affliction. Then, Christ appears unexpectedly and removes our fear and frees us from all danger. By his ineffable power he changes horror into joy, and as it were, calms the storm. . . . When Christ appears and looks on us, we shall effortlessly succeed even against our hope. And we who are in danger because of our distance from Christ shall no longer have to labor to accomplish what is helpful for us when he is present. Christ is our deliverance from all danger and the accomplishment of achievements beyond hope to those who receive him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.4.[11]

I Am. Bede: He says only "I am." He trusts that they will easily recognize his voice, which was so familiar to them. Or, more probably, he shows that he was the same who said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, the one who is has sent me to you." Commentary on Matthew 3.14.[12]

6:21 *Immediate Results*

Further Miracles Seen. Theodore of Mopsuestia: In order to increase the miracle before their eyes, he walked on the water and did not get into the boat. But the Evangelist says, "Then they wanted to take him into the boat,[13] and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going." He records this in order to demonstrate that they did not take him but that, while they tried to bring him in, both the boat and the Lord reached land at an awesome speed.[14] They could not doubt what the Lord had done or consider him a ghost when they saw that the boat had reached the land toward which they were going at such a speed, coupled with the fact that the Lord was with them. Commentary on John 3.6.21.[15]

6:22-24 *People Were Looking for Jesus*

Opportunity for the Crowd to Infer a Miracle. Chrysostom: Why didn't he enter the ship? Because his intention was to make the miracle greater and more openly reveal to them his Godhead. . . . The day following, the people who had stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there except the one that his disciples entered. They also saw that Jesus had not gone with his disciples into the boat but that his disciples were alone when they left. And why is John so exact about this? Why didn't he simply say that the multitude had crossed over on the next day? He wants to teach us that Jesus allowed the multitudes, if not openly, at least indirectly to infer what had taken place. . . . What else could they do but suspect that he had crossed the sea on foot? For he could not have gone over in a ship since there was only one ship there—that in which his disciples had entered. Homilies on the Gospel of John 43.1.[16]

A Greater Miracle Than That of Moses. Chrysostom: The Jews, guided by Moses, passed over the Red Sea, but that case is widely different. Moses did everything with prayer and as a servant. Christ does this with absolute power. There when the south wind blew, the water yielded so as to allow them to pass over on dry land,[17] but here the miracle is greater. For the sea retained its proper nature and in this way carried its Lord upon its surface, thus testifying to the Scripture that says, "Who walks on the sea as on pavement."[18] Homilies on the Gospel of John 43.2.[19]

[11]LF 43: 338-39**. [12]PL 92:73. [13]RSV implies he went into the boat. [14]Theodore notes that John had reported the distance as 25 to 30 stadii, about 3 or 4 miles. [15]CSCO 4 3 :135. [16]NPNF 1 14:156**. [17]Ex 14:21. [18]Job 9:8. [19]NPNF 1 14:156**.

THE CROWDS AND THE BREAD JOHN 6:25-34

Overview: When the crowd finds Jesus, they are not only amazed at how he got there but have also apparently forgotten about making him king (Chrysostom). The one who had fled to the mountain for solitude now intermingles with the crowd to fill their souls with another kind of bread (Augustine). But their minds are still fixated on the bread for the body (Chrysostom), just as people still are when they seek out Jesus for what he can give them rather than for who he is (Augustine). Work cannot provide security, nor is that its purpose. Jesus wants the people to know that he fed their bodies only so that they would not seek the food that was temporary but eternal (Chrysostom). Jesus can provide this spiritual food because he has received the Father's seal of approval. As the Son, he is the seal, or imprint, of the divine so that we may see the Father (Hilary). It is through Christ that we too receive the seal of God (Cyril of Alexandria), which is the mark of perfection and love in us (Ambrose). To do the work of God is to believe in the Son whom the Father has sealed (Hilary). But even that very faith is still the work of God in us (Augustine).

After all Jesus has said, the crowd still lacks faith as they ask for yet another miracle. But Jesus has more to teach them. He identifies the Father as the giver of the bread about which he had just spoken (Chrysostom), finding an opening to gradually lead the crowd from transitory bread and wine to his true body and blood (Ephrem). As our daily bread, he is the only necessity of life (Tertullian). He is the only true bread from heaven who gives life; the manna was only a foreshadowing (Cyril of Alexandria). Even his birthplace in Bethlehem pointed toward the one who would be the bread from heaven (Eusebius), which refreshes and sustains, just as the water he promised to the Samaritan woman would never fail her (Augustine).

6:25 *Rabbi, When Did You Come Here?*

The Crowd Forgets About Making Jesus King. Chrysostom: After such a great miracle, the crowd does not ask Jesus how he had crossed over or how he had arrived there. In fact, they do not seem to be concerned about it at all. They ask him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" but what they are really asking is "How did you get here?" And see how shallow they are. After noting that

he was "*that* prophet" and trying to take him by force to make him king, they do nothing of the sort when they finally do find him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 43.1-2.[1]

Bread for the Soul. Augustine: So he who had fled to the mountain mixes and converses with the multitude. Only a little while before they would have kept him and made him king. . . . But after the sacrament of the miracle, he begins to teach . . . and fills their souls with his word whose bodies he had just satisfied with bread—provided they take it in. And if they do not, let that be taken up which they do not receive so that the fragments may not be lost. Tractates on the Gospel of John 25.9-10.[2]

6:26 *Looking for Bread*

Jesus' Reproach. Chrysostom: And when he was about to enter into stubborn and disobedient Capernaum, he worked the miracle of the loaves because he wanted to soften their disobedience, not only by what took place within the city but also by those [miracles] done outside the city. For this should have been enough to soften even the hardest [heart] of stone, as is evidenced in the multitudes who flocked to that city [because of the miracles]. And yet their hearts are calloused, looking again for food for the body, which is why Jesus reproaches them. Homilies on the Gospel of John 43.2.[3]

Satisfying the Flesh Instead of the Spirit. Augustine: It is as if he said, "You seek me to satisfy the flesh, not the Spirit." How many seek Jesus for no other objective than to get some kind of temporal benefit! One has a business that has run into problems, and he seeks the intercession of the clergy; another is oppressed by someone more powerful than himself, and he flies to the church. Another desires intervention with someone over whom he has little influence. One person wants this, and another person wants that. The church is filled with these kinds of people! Jesus is scarcely sought after for his own sake. . . . Here too he says, you seek me for something else; seek me for my own sake. He insinuates the truth that he himself is that food . . . "that endures to eternal life." Tractates on the Gospel of John 25.10.[4]

6:27a *The Eternal Food*

Do Not Be Nailed to the Things of This Life. Chrysostom: To "take no thought" does not mean "not to work"[5] but "not to be nailed to the things of this life." In other words, do not worry about tomorrow's comfort; in fact, consider it superfluous. There are those who do no work and yet lay up treasures for tomorrow. There are also others who do work and yet are careful for nothing. Carefulness and work are not the same thing. People do not work because they trust in their work but so that they may give to the person who is in need. Homilies on the Gospel of John 44.1.[6]

Temporal Food Should Lead to Eternal Food. Chrysostom: I fed your bodies, he says, so that after this you might seek that other food that endures, which nourishes the soul. But you run right back to that food that is temporal. Therefore you do not understand that I lead you not to this imperfect food but to that which nourishes not the body but the soul. Homilies on the Gospel of John 44.1.[7]

6:27b *The Father's Seal*

The Son Is the Entire Imprint of the Father. Hilary of Poitiers: It is the nature of a seal to exhibit the whole form of the figure graven on it and that an impression taken from it reproduces it in every respect. And since it receives the whole of that which is impressed, it

[1]NPNF 1 14:156**. [2]NPNF 1 7:163**. [3]NPNF 1 14:156**. [4]NPNF 1 7:163**. [5]Chrysostom also notes how this passage has wrongly been used to justify laziness. [6]NPNF 1 14:158**. [7]NPNF 1 14:158**.

displays also in itself entirely whatever has been impressed on it. Yet this comparison is not adequate to exemplify the divine birth, because seals presuppose matter, difference of nature and an act of impression where the likeness of stronger natures is impressed on things of a more yielding nature. . . . What God had sealed should display in itself none other than the form of the God who sealed it. . . . As far as his being in the form of God by virtue of God's seal on him, he still remained God. But inasmuch as he was to take the form of a servant and become obedient unto death, not grasping at his equality with God, he emptied himself through obedience to take the form of a slave. And he emptied himself of the form of God, that is, of that in which he was equal with God—not that he regarded his equality with God as any encroachment—although he was in the form of God and equal with God and sealed by God as God.[8] On the Trinity 8.44-45.[9]

Through Christ We Can Receive the Divine Seal. Cyril of Alexandria: The countenance of God the Father is the Son who is the imprint of God. But the light of God is the grace that passes into creation through the Spirit, by which we are refashioned to God through faith. We receive through God, as with a seal, the being conformed to his Son. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.5.[10]

The Mark of Perfection and Love. Ambrose: [Christ] is our seal, which is the mark of perfection and of love because the Father, loving the Son, set his seal on him.
Isaac, or the Soul 8.75.[11]

6:28-29 *The Work of God*

Faith in God's Sealed Son. Hilary of Poitiers: In setting forth the mystery of his incarnation and his Godhead, our Lord has also uttered the teaching of our faith and hope that we should work not for that food that perishes but that which abides for ever; that we should remember that this food of eternity is given to us by the Son of man as sealed by God the Father; that we should know that this is the work of God: even faith in him whom he has sent. And who is it whom the Father has sent? Even he whom the Father has sealed. And who is he whom the Father has sealed? In truth, the Son of man, even he who gives the food of eternal life. On the Trinity 8.42.[12]

This Faith Is the Work of God. Augustine: Why do you make ready your teeth and stomach? Believe, and you have eaten. Faith is, indeed, distinguished from works, as the apostle says, "that a person is justified by faith without works."[13] And there are works that seem to be good . . . because they are not referred to that end from which they are good. "For the end of the law is Christ, unto justice to everyone who believes."[14] Therefore, he did not wish to separate faith from work, but he said that faith itself is a work. For this is the faith that works by love.[15] He did not say, "This is your work" but "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent," so that he who takes glory may take glory in the Lord.[16] Tractates on the Gospel of John 25.12.1-2.[17]

6:30 *Looking for a Sign*

They Ask for Yet Another Miracle. Chrysostom: There is nothing worse, nothing more shameful, than gluttony, which clouds the judgment and reduces the soul to satisfying appetites. . . . For instance, nothing can be more unreasonable than their asking for another miracle, as if none had been given already. And they do not even leave the choice of the miracle to our Lord but would oblige him to give them just that

[8]See Phil 2:5-11. [9]NPNF 2 9:150-51*. [10]LF 43:350**. Gregory of Nazianzus refers to Christ as the Father's "most unerring impress"; see *Oration* 30.20 (NPNF 2 7:316-17). [11]FC 65:59. [12]NPNF 2 9:149-50*. [13]See Rom 3:28. [14]See Rom 10:4. [15]See Gal 5:6. [16]See 1 Cor 1:31. [17]FC 79:249-50*.

sign that was given to their ancestors: "Our fathers ate manna in the desert." . . . There were many miracles performed in Egypt, at the Red Sea and in the desert, and yet they remembered this one the best of any. Such is the force of appetite. . . . They do not mention this miracle as the work either of God or of Moses, in order to avoid raising Jesus on the one hand to an equality with God or lowering him on the other by a comparison with Moses. Rather, they take the middle ground, only saying, "Our fathers ate manna in the desert." Homilies on the Gospel of John 45.1.[18]

6:31-32 *The True Bread from Heaven*

Jesus Gradually Reveals Himself As the Bread of Life. Chrysostom: He calls this the "true bread," not because the miracle of the manna was false but because it was a type and not the very truth itself. But in mentioning Moses, Jesus does not compare himself with him, for the Jews did not as yet prefer him to Moses, of whom they still had a higher opinion. So that after saying, "Moses did not give," he does not say "I give" but says that the Father, and not Moses, gives. When they heard this, the people replied, "Give us this bread to eat." They still thought that it was something material, and they yet expected to satisfy their appetites, and so they quickly ran to him. And what does Christ do? Leading them on little by little, he says, "The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Homilies on the Gospel of John 45.1.[19]

Getting Them Accustomed to His Bread and Wine. Ephrem the Syrian: From a little bread, our Lord made an abundance of bread in the midst of the desert, and in Cana he turned water into wine. At first he set out to give instruction to their mouths about his bread and wine, until the time came for him to give them his blood and his body also. He gave them the taste of a superabundance of transitory bread and wine in order to give them an eager desire for the superabundance of his living body and blood. He gave them these lesser things without price, so that they might know that this gift of his, of highest value, was free. He gave to them freely those things that they were able to purchase from him at a price. He therefore did not sell to them anything that they were able to buy, so that they might know that there was no fee he required from them for that which they did not have; for they were able to pay the price of his bread and wine, but they could not pay the price of his body and blood. It was in this way that he not only gave to us freely, but he was even enticing us as well; for he gave these lesser things freely to captivate us to come and receive this of highest value, which is without price. These lesser things that he gave of bread and wine delighted the mouth; that [highest gift] of body and blood brings aid to the mind. He captivated us with these things, which bring pleasure to the palate, in order to draw us to that which brings life to [our] souls. For this reason, he hid the sweetness in the wine he made, so that they might know what treasure is hidden in his life-giving blood. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 12.1.[20]

6:33 *The Bread of God Gives Life*

Christ Is Our Daily Bread Because He Is Our Life. Tertullian: For Christ is our Bread because Christ is Life, and bread is life. "I am," says he, "the Bread of life."[21] And, a little above he says, "The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven." Then we find, too, that his body is reckoned in bread: "This is my body."[22] And so, in petitioning for "daily bread," we ask for perpetuity in Christ and indivisibility from his body. But, because "bread" is admissible in a carnal sense too, it cannot be so used without the religious remembrance of spiritual discipline. For the Lord commands that bread be prayed for

[18]NPNF 1 14:159-60**. [19]NPNF 1 14:160**. [20]CB709:74-76. [21]Jn 6:35. [22]Mt 26:26.

which is the only food necessary for believers. On Prayer 6.[23]

The Manna Foreshadowed the True Bread. Cyril of Alexandria: Imagine Christ saying something like this: "You foolishly suppose that the manna is 'the bread from heaven,' since it merely fed the people of Israel in the wilderness while there were countless other nations throughout the world. You suppose that God wanted to demonstrate his loving kindness so narrowly as to give food to only one people? . . . Let no one think," says Christ, "that the manna was truly the bread from heaven; but one should rather choose that which is clearly able to feed and to completely give life to the whole world." . . . The only begotten of God the Father is the true manna, the bread from heaven, given to all rational creatures by God the Father. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.6.[24]

Bethlehem, House of Bread. Eusebius of Caesarea: He would be born nowhere else but in the place at Bethlehem, near Jerusalem, in the spot that is even now pointed out.[25] For no one is witnessed to by all the inhabitants as having been born there—in accordance with the Gospel story, no one remarkable or famous among all people, except Jesus Christ. Bethlehem is translated "House of Bread," bearing the name of him who came forth from it, our Savior, the true Word of God, and nourisher of spiritual souls, which he himself shows by saying, "I am the Bread that came down from heaven." Proof of the Gospel 7.2.43-44.[26]

6:34 *Give Us This Bread*

The Desire for Bread and Water That Never Fail. Augustine: As the Samaritan woman, to whom it was said, "Whoever drinks of this water shall never thirst," thought he meant natural water and said, "Sir, give me this water," thinking she might never be in want again; in the same way these people say, "O Lord, give us this bread" that refreshes and sustains us and yet never fails. Tractates on the Gospel of John 25.13.[27]

[23]ANF 3:683*. [24]LF 43:362, 365**. [25]Eusebius in the early fourth century was confident that the specific place of birth "the spot even now pointed out," was the same as that attested by the Evangelists. [26]*POG* 2:84*. [27]NPNF 1 7:165**.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE JOHN 6:35-40

Overview: The bread of God is the only food that can satisfy when we are faced with affliction (Ignatius). Jesus refers to himself as this bread, as a reference to his godhead, since it is later that he refers to his flesh (Chrysostom). By eating of this bread of life, we human beings who were originally created for eternal life are now given power over death (Cyril of Alexandria) as the bread of Christ through the Spirit preserves our body for incorruption as we partake of the sacrament (Theodore of Heraclea). However, those who do not hunger to commune, feigning reverence at partaking too often, become a snare and an offense (Cyril of Alexandria). The bread of Christ remains the food of saints even today (Ambrose) giving us a foretaste of that resurrection feast yet to come when we will no longer be dependent on the earthly food of the senses (Theodore of Heraclea).

The fact that the Father has given believers to the Son shows that faith is no accident (Chrysostom). Christ will not cast out them out; rather, it is pride that casts one out, and it is humility in imitation of a humble God that restores, as Christ's members humbly do their Father's will even as he did (Augustine). Although Christ accomplishes the Father's will, this will is in no way contradictory to his own (Hilary). If Christ surrendered his will to the Father, we should do so as well, relying on the Father's will to sustain us (Tertullian). He will lose nothing the Father has given to him, including the humanity he received at his birth, as well as all the sheep, including those who have strayed or are sick, who have been entrusted to his care (Jerome). These have been predestined by God's unerring providence so that they will not perish (Augustine). This is not only the Father's will but also the Son's (Chrysostom).

The Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes will have eternal life. The Jews saw Jesus but did not believe; we do not see and yet believe, receiving eternal life (Augustine).The one who believes in this life will be perfected in the life to come at the resurrection (Clement of Alexandria). The resurrection reward awaits those who remain faithful (Chrysostom). Then the Father will bring those believers to the Son and the Son will receive them and revive them to immortality (Cyril of Alexandria). Christ here speaks to us of a twofold resurrection: the first when a person comes to faith and passes from death to life, the second when he is raised on the last day (Augustine).

6:35 *Jesus Is the Bread of Life*

Desire the Bread of God. Ignatius of Antioch: Do not talk about Jesus Christ while you desire the world. Do not let envy dwell among you. . . . I take no pleasure in corruptible food or the pleasures of this life. I want the bread of God, which is the flesh of Christ who is of the seed of David; and for drink I want his blood, which is incorruptible love. Epistle to the Romans 7.[1]

The Bread Is a Reference to the Godhead. Chrysostom: Now he proceeds to commit to them mysteries. First, he speaks of his Godhead, saying, "I am the bread of life." For this is not spoken of his body since he says toward the end, "And the bread that I shall give is my flesh." At present, [bread of life] refers to his Godhead,[2] which is "bread" through God the Word, just as this bread [of the sacrament] through the Spirit descending on it, is made heavenly bread. Here he does not use witnesses as in his former address, for he had the miracle of the loaves to witness to him and also had the Jews themselves for a while pretending to believe him. In the former case they opposed and accused him. This is the reason why here he declares himself. Homilies on the Gospel of John 45.2.[3]

The Bread of Life Gives Power over Death. Cyril of Alexandria: In effect, Jesus is saying, "I am the bread of life," not bodily bread,

[1]*AF* 173-75. [2]Cf. Theodore of Heraclea below. [3]NPNF 1 14:161*.

which merely eliminates the physical suffering brought on by hunger, but rather that bread that refashions the entire living being to eternal life. The human being, who had been created for eternal life, is now given power over death. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.6.[4]

Christ Preserves Our Body for Incorruption. Theodore of Heraclea: Since earthly bread customarily does give life to our weak nature of the flesh, [Christ] also does this through the energy of the Spirit by making the spirit alive and preserving the body for incorruptible incorruption after the resurrection and giving this to those who believe in him. Certainly he calls his flesh the bread of life in this place since it is eaten in the sacrament. Fragments on John 33.[5]

The Benefits of Frequent Communion. Cyril of Alexandria: What then does Christ promise? Nothing corruptible, but rather that blessing[6] in the participation of his holy flesh and blood that restores humanity wholly to incorruption so that it should need none of the things that normally drive off the death of the flesh, for example, food and drink. . . . The holy body of Christ gives life to those who have it within themselves, and by holding them together, [it] grants incorruption, inasmuch as it is commingled with our bodies. . . . Since these things are so, let those who have been baptized and tasted the divine grace understand this: if they are sluggish or reluctant about going to church and for long periods of time keep away from the eucharistic gift through Christ, feigning a pernicious reverence by not partaking of him sacramentally, they exclude themselves from eternal life inasmuch as they decline to be enlivened. Thus, their refusal [to partake of the Eucharist] though seeming to be an expression of reverence, is turned into a snare and an offense. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.6.[7]

The Bread of Christ Is the Food of Saints. Ambrose: [Christ] is a rich treasure, for his bread is rich. And "rich" is an apt term, for one who has eaten this bread will be unable to feel hunger. He gave it to the apostles to distribute to a believing people,[8] and today he gives it to us. For he, as a priest, daily consecrates it with his own words. Therefore this bread has become the food of saints. On the Patriarchs 9.38.[9]

Jesus Gives Real Food, Real Life. Theodore of Heraclea: Because we have all died to sin—or because after the eternal, incorruptible resurrection he will give life to those who believe, when there will be neither food nor drink perceived by the senses—therefore we "will certainly not hunger." To be sure, the manna of those who ate it "in the desert" nourished the body for a little while, but it did not contribute anything to the soul to help it live virtuously and nobly. All of them (except for a few) were discovered to have been godless. But the living Bread recovered the souls of the believers by his words of life and procured real life for the world. Fragments on John 31.[10]

6:36 *Seeing and Not Believing*

They Saw the Miracles and Scripture. Chrysostom: When he says, "You have seen me and yet have not believed," he alludes partly to his miracles, partly to the testimony from the Scriptures. "For they," he says, "testify of me."[11] Homilies on the Gospel of John 45.2.[12]

6:37 *All That the Father Gives Me*

Neither Faith Nor Unbelief Is an Accident. Chrysostom: When he says, "All that the Father gives me shall come to me," he touches on their unbelief, showing that whoever does not believe on him transgresses the will of the Father. He covertly shows that unbelievers are not only

[4]LF 43:373-74**. [5]*JKGK* 73. [6]The Eucharist. [7]LF 43:376**. [8]Mt 15:36. [9]FC 65:263*. [10]*JKGK* 72-73. [11]Jn 5:39. [12]NPNF 1 14:161*.

at variance with him but also with the Father. For if this is [the Son's] will, and if this is the reason he came, that is, that he might save the entire world, then those who do not believe transgress his will. When, therefore, he says, the Father guides someone, there is nothing that hinders that person from coming to [Jesus].[13] . . . And Paul says that [the Son] delivers them up to the Father.[14] Now just as the Father, when he gives, does not take from himself, so neither does the Son take from himself when he gives up. The Son is said to give up to the Father because we are brought to the Father by him. And at the same time, we read that it was the Father "by whom you were called to the fellowship of his Son,"[15] that is, by the will of the Father.[16] . . . Faith in me, he intimates here, is no ordinary thing or one that comes from human reason, but [it] needs a revelation from above. And this he establishes throughout his discourse, showing that this faith requires a noble sort of soul, and one drawn on by God. . . .

The expression "that the Father gives me" shows that it is no accident whether a person believes or not. It shows that belief is not the work of human reasoning but requires a revelation from on high and a mind devout enough to receive the revelation. "Whoever then," our Lord says, "comes to me, shall be saved," meaning they shall be greatly cared for. For to save such as these I took up flesh and the form of a servant. Homilies on the Gospel of John 45.2-3.[17]

Pride Casts Out, Humility Restores. Augustine: This is the reason why he does not cast out those who come to him. "For I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him that sent me." The soul departed from God because it was proud. . . . Pride casts us out, humility restores us. . . . When a physician in the treatment of a disease cures certain outward symptoms but not the cause that produces them, his cure is only temporary. So long as the cause remains, the disease may return. . . . That the cause then of all diseases, that is, pride, might be eradicated, the Son of God humbled himself. Why are you proud, O man? The Son of God humbled himself for you. It might shame you, perhaps, to imitate a humble man; but imitate at least a humble God. . . . And this is the proof of his humility: "I came not to do my own will but the will of him that sent me." Pride does its own will; humility does the will of God. For this very reason, therefore, I will not cast out the one who comes to me, because I came not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. I came to teach humility by being humble myself. Whoever comes to me is made a member of me. Such a person is necessarily humble, because he will not do his own will but the will of God; and therefore [this person] is not cast out. He was cast out, as proud. . . . But he will not cast us out because we are members of the one who desired to be our head by teaching us humility. Tractates on the Gospel of John 25.15-16, 18.[18]

6:38 *The Will of God*

Christ Manifests Obedience. Hilary of Poitiers: It was not that he himself was unwilling but that he might manifest his obedience as the result of his Father's will. For his own will is to do his Father's. His will is to carry out the Father's will. On the Trinity 3.9.[19]

We Are Provoked to Do God's Will. Tertullian: If [Christ] himself proclaimed that he did not his own but the Father's will, without doubt those things that he used to do were the Father's will. We are now encouraged to do these exemplary things too: to preach, to work, to endure even to the point of death. And we need the will of God so that we may be able to fulfill these duties. . . . [Christ] himself was the will and the power of the Father. And yet, for the demon-

[13]Chrysostom also cites Jn 6:44. [14]1 Cor 15:24. [15]1 Cor 1:9. [16]He also cites Mt 16:17. [17]NPNF 1 14:161-62**. [18]NPNF 1 7:165-67**. [19]NPNF 2 9:64. See also *On the Trinity* 9.49, where he insists Christ's will was not controlled by necessity. For further discussion of Christ's will, see also *On the Trinity* 9.74; 11.30.

stration of the patience that was due, he gave himself up to the Father's will. On Prayer 4.[20]

6:39 *Losing Nothing Given*

The Lost Sheep Are Returned. Jerome: Christ speaks here of the whole of his humanity, which he had taken on him in its entirety at his birth.[21] Then shall the sheep that was lost[22] and was wandering in the lower world be carried healthy on the Savior's shoulders. And the sheep that was sick with sin shall be taken care of by the mercy of the Judge. Against John of Jerusalem 34.[23]

Foreknowledge and Perseverance. Augustine: They therefore who by God's unerring providence are foreknown and predestined, called, justified, glorified, even before their new birth, or before they are born at all, are already the children of God and absolutely cannot perish. These truly come to Christ. . . . By him there is given also perseverance in good even to the end. For it is not given except to those who will not perish since those who do not persevere will perish. On Rebuke and Grace 23.[24]

6:40 *The Will of the Father*

Wills in Concert. Chrysostom: But what do you mean? Do you have one will and he has another? No, certainly. Look at what he says afterwards: "And this is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have everlasting life." Is not then this your will too? . . . For the Son quickens whom he will.[25] . . . He says then, I came to do nothing but what the Father wills, for I have no will distinct from my Father's. All things that the Father has are mine. But he does not say that here. He reserves these higher truths for the end of his ministry. Homilies on the Gospel of John 45.3.[26]

Whoever Sees and Believes. Augustine: He has said two things: "This is the work of God that you should believe in the one whom he has sent," while here he added, "whoever sees and believes." The Jews saw but did not believe; they had the one condition, lacked the other. How could they attain to eternal life without the other? The reason those who saw did not attain eternal life was because they did not also believe. If so, what about us who have believed but have not seen? If it is those two things that earn eternal life, seeing and believing—and whoever is lacking one of them cannot attain to the reward of eternal life—what are we to do? The Jews [who saw him] lacked the one; we the other. They had seeing but lacked believing. We have believing but lack seeing. Well, as regards our having believing and lacking seeing, we have prophetically been declared blessed by the Lord himself just as Thomas, one of the Twelve, was blessed when he felt his scars by touching them. Sermon 14a.5.[27]

Faith Leads to Perfection at the Resurrection. Clement of Alexandria: Faith, so to speak, is the attempt generated in time; the final result is the attainment of the promise secured for eternity. Now the Lord himself has most clearly revealed the equality of salvation when he said, "This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day." As far as possible in this world, which is what he means by the last day—and which is preserved till the time that it shall end—we believe that we are made perfect. Wherefore he says, "The one who believes on the Son has everlasting life."[28] If then, those who have believed have life, what remains beyond the possession of eternal life? Nothing is lacking in faith

[20]ANF 3:682-83. [21]Tertullian also includes the flesh in what Christ received from the Father, to emphasize that the flesh will be raised up at the resurrection along with the soul. See *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 34 (ANF 3:570). [22]Lk 15:4. [23]NPNF 2 6:442*. [24]NPNF 1 5:481**. [25]See Jn 5:21. [26]NPNF 1 14:162**. [27]*WSA* 3 11:27*. See also Tertullian *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 34 (ANF 3:570), where he too discusses seeing and believing. [28]Jn 3:36.

as it is perfect and complete in itself. Christ the Educator 1.6.[29]

The Resurrection Fulfills the Prayer "Thy Kingdom Come." Chrysostom: No one who has lived correctly disbelieves the resurrection, but every day they pray and repeat that holy sentence, "thy kingdom come." Who then are the ones who disbelieve the resurrection? Those who have unholy ways and an unclean life. As the prophet says, "His ways are profane at all times. Your judgments are removed from before him."[30] For one cannot possibly live a pure life without believing in the resurrection, since they who are conscious of no iniquity both speak of and wish for and believe in it, that they may receive their reward. Homilies on the Gospel of John 45.3.[31]

The Operation of the Holy Trinity. Cyril of Alexandria: The Father then brings to the Son, by knowledge and God-befitting contemplation, those to whom he decreed the divine grace. The Son receives and revives them, and engrafting his own good into those who are of their own nature apt to decay and shedding on them as a spark of fire the life-giving power of the Spirit, re-forms them throughout unto immortality. But when you hear that the Father brings them and that the Son gives the power of renewed living to those that run to him, do not go off into absurd fancies, as though each were supposed to do individually and severally what belongs appropriately by nature to each. The Father is co-worker with the Son, and likewise the Son with the Father, and our salvation and recuperation from death to life is the work, so to say, of the whole Holy Trinity. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.1.[32]

The Twofold Resurrection. Augustine: "Whoever sees the Son and believes on him should have everlasting life," that is, by believing, by passing over to life, as at the first resurrection. But this is only the first resurrection. He alludes to the second when he says, "And I will raise him up at the last day." Tractates on the Gospel of John 25.19.[33]

[29]ANF 2:216*. [30]Ps 10:5 (9:26 LXX). [31]NPNF 1 14:163-64*. [32]LF 43:394-95*. [33]NPNF 1 7:167*.

Learning from the Bread of Life John 6:41-51

Overview: Lacking the hunger of the inner person (Augustine), the Jews murmur against Jesus because they could not hear his words in the spiritual sense in which they were meant. They refer to him as the son of Joseph in obvious ignorance of his miraculous birth (Chrysostom). However, Jesus understands that their murmuring is due to their lack of hunger because they have not been drawn to Christ by the Father, which itself is a mystery (Augustine). The Father draws individuals to the Son, who later gives the kingdom to the Father, demonstrating love and mutual regard but not subordination (Ambrose). Christ leads to the Father, and the Father leads to Christ (Hilary). We come to Christ by the gift of faith from the Father and should therefore be humble, since it is not our work but the Father's. Christ is not speaking of one who is forced to be drawn but of one to whom Christ is revealed who longs to know him as one longs to know the truth (Augustine).

It is better to be taught by God than by the increasing number of unworthy clergy (Gregory of Nazianzus). God as teacher teaches us through his Son since faith can ultimately be learned only from God (Chrysostom). The prophets wrote that they shall all be taught by God—not that they all come, but that no one comes in any other way. We hear what the Father teaches through the voice of his Son (Augustine) because only those in the Godhead can fully see God, and the Son through the Spirit then makes him known to us to the extent we are able to receive (Cyril of Jerusalem). The one who receives and believes in Christ has life because Christ is the life who killed death (Augustine).

Jesus declares a second time "I am the bread of life," perhaps emphatically because sin too has its own special bread—of death, which he opposes. Those who eat this bread die in their sins. That is why Christ calls on us to hunger and thirst for the infinitely more satisfying bread that he provides (Athanasius). As the Bread of life, he kneads his body, mixing himself with us to form one loaf (Chrysostom) and through this union destroys the corruption and death that lurk there (Cyril of Alexandria). The living bread of the sacrament is much greater than the manna because it gives the body of Christ, which is the substance of eternal life (Ambrose, Ephrem). Whoever eats of this bread worthily has life (Augustine) because it is the forgiveness of sins (Ambrose).

The Father offered himself to us as milk first because we were like infants (Irenaeus). Now he provides us with a whole new spiritual diet for our spiritual growth (Clement) in the manna that still rains down from heaven today in the body of Christ given in the sacrament (Ambrose). And so, as beggars before God we ask for what all beggars seek to receive: bread (Augustine). As we receive this bread, we as scattered grains are brought together in the one heavenly bread of Christ (Cyprian), which he calls his flesh. He gave his flesh as a ransom for all flesh; by becoming flesh the life-giving word made his flesh life-giving, thus giving life to all who partake of it (Cyril of Alexandria).

6:41 *The Jews Murmured*

Lacking Hunger of the Inner Person. Augustine: But they were far from being fit for that heavenly bread and did not know how to hunger for it. . . . For this bread requires the hunger of the inner person. Tractates on the Gospel of John 26.1.[1]

[1]NPNF 1 7:168*.

The Carnal Question. Chrysostom: His meaning is, "You must hear spiritually what relates to me, for he who hears carnally neither profits nor gathers any advantage." It was carnal to question how Jesus came down from heaven, to consider him as the son of Joseph, to ask, "How can he give us his flesh to eat?" All this was carnal when, instead, they ought to have understood the matter in a mystical and spiritual sense. "But," says someone, "how could they understand what 'eating flesh' might mean?" Then it was their duty to wait for the proper time and enquire, and not to abandon him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 47.2.[2]

6:42 *Is This Not Jesus, the Son of Joseph?*

Ignorance of Jesus' Miraculous Birth. Chrysostom: It is evident that they did not yet know of his miraculous birth, for they call him the son of Joseph. Nor are they blamed for this. Our Lord does not reply, "I am not the son of Joseph," not because he *was* his son but because the miracle of his birth would have overpowered them. And if the birth according to the flesh were above their belief, how much more that higher and ineffable birth? Homilies on the Gospel of John 46.1.[3]

6:43 *Murmuring Among Themselves*

Murmuring Against the Doctrine of Grace. Augustine: As if to say, I know why you do not hunger after this bread and so cannot understand it and do not seek it. . . . "No one can come to me unless the Father who has sent me draws him." This is the doctrine of grace: none comes unless they are drawn. But whom the Father draws, and whom not, and why he draws one and not another, do not presume to decide if you want to avoid falling into error. Take the doctrine as it is given to you: and, if you are not drawn, pray that you may be. Tractates on the Gospel of John 26.2.[4]

6:44 *The Father Draws Us*

Jesus Not Subordinate to the Father. Ambrose: And you say that the Son of God is subject by reason of weakness—the Son, to whom the Father brings men and women that he may raise them up in the last day. Does this seem in your eyes to be subjection where the kingdom is prepared for the Father and the Father brings it to the Son? There is no place for perversion of words since the Son gives the kingdom to the Father and none is preferred before him. For as the Father gives to the Son, and the Son, again, to the Father, here are plain proofs of love and regard: seeing that they [i.e., Father and Son] give to each other that neither he who receives obtains, as it were, what was another's, nor he that gives loses anything. On the Christian Faith 2.12.104.[5]

Christ Leads to the Father and the Father to Christ. Hilary of Poitiers: There is no approach to the Father except through Christ. But there is also no approach to Christ, unless the Father draws us. On the Trinity 11.33.[6]

We Have Come to Christ by the Gift of Faith. Augustine: How have you come? You have come by believing, but you have not yet come through to the end. We are still on the road. We have come, but we have not yet come through. "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling, in case the Lord might be angry and you perish from the way of justice."[7] When you arrogate to yourself the discovery of the way of justice, be afraid of perishing from the way of justice through this very arrogance. "I have come," he says, "I have come of my own accord, I have come of my own free will." Why such consternation? Do you want to hear that even this much has been bestowed on you as well? Listen to him calling: "No one can come to

[2]NPNF 1 14:169-70*. [3]NPNF 1 14:164*. [4]NPNF 1 7:168**. [5]NPNF 2 10:237-38*. [6]NPNF 2 9:212-13*. [7]Ps 2:11-12.

me unless the Father who sent me draws him."[8] Sermon 30.10.[9]

The Revelation of Truth Is the Drawing. Augustine: Do not think that you are drawn against your will. The soul is drawn also by love. . . . And in case someone says to us, "How can I believe with the will if I am drawn?" I say that it is not enough to be drawn by the will; you are drawn even by delight. What is it to be drawn by delight? "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he shall give you the desires of your heart."[10] There is a certain craving of the heart to which that bread of heaven is sweet. If the poet could say, "Every person is drawn by his own pleasure"[11]—not necessity but pleasure; not obligation but delight—how much more boldly ought we to say that a person is drawn to Christ when he delights in the truth, when he delights in blessedness, delights in righteousness, delights in everlasting life? Do not the bodily senses have their pleasures, and the soul its? . . . Give me one who loves, who longs, who burns, who sighs for the source of his being and his eternal home, and he will know what I mean. . . .

But why did he say, "Except my Father draw him"? If we are to be drawn, let us be drawn by him to whom his love said, "We will run after the fragrance of your ointment."[12] But let us see what is meant by this. The Father draws to the Son those who believe on the Son because they consider that God is his Father. For the Father begat the Son equal to himself. And those who think and believe truly and seriously that he on whom they believe is equal to the Father, these are the ones the Father draws to the Son. Arius believed the Son to be a creature; the Father did not draw [Arius]. . . . One whom the Father has drawn said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."[13] . . . And so was said, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father which is in heaven."[14] This revelation is itself the drawing. . . . For if earthly objects, when put before us, draw us . . . how much more shall Christ, when revealed by the Father? For what does the soul long for more than truth? . . . Here, we can more easily be hungered than satisfied, especially if we have good hope. . . . There, we shall be filled. . . . This is why he adds, "And I will raise him up at the last day," as if he said, he shall be filled with that for which he now thirsts at the resurrection of the dead, for I will raise him up. Tractates on the Gospel of John 26.4-6.[15]

6:45 *All Shall Be Taught by God*

Those Unworthy of the Office. Gregory of Nazianzus: I was ashamed of all those others who . . . intrude into the most sacred offices and, before becoming worthy to approach the temples, lay claim to the sanctuary.[16] They push and thrust around the holy table as if they thought this order to be a means of livelihood instead of a pattern of virtue, or an absolute authority instead of a ministry of which we must give account. In fact they are almost more in number than those whom they govern. . . . Soon enough, as time and this evil alike progress, they will not even have anyone left to rule when all are teachers instead of taught by God, as the promise says, and all prophesy.[17] In Defense of His Flight to Pontus, Oration 2.8.[18]

Faith Can Be Learned Only from God. Chrysostom: He then shows the way in which the Father draws. "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' "[19] You see the excellence of faith: that it cannot be learned from people or by the teaching of people but only from God himself. . . . If then all shall be taught by God, how is it that some shall not believe? Because *all* here only means in general. Besides,

[8]Jn 6:44. [9]*WSA* 3 2:129*. Chrysostom attributes a great role to the will; see *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 46.1. [10]Ps 37:4 (36:4 LXX). [11]Lat *trahit sua quemque voluptas* (Virgil *Eclogue* 2.65). [12]Song 1:3. [13]Mt 16:16. [14]Mt 16:17. [15]NPNF 1 7:169-70**. [16]The reference is to the priesthood. [17]See also Num 11:29; 1 Cor 14:24. [18]NPNF 2 7:206*. [19]Is 54:13.

the prophecy does not mean absolutely everyone but all who have the desire. For the Teacher sits ready to impart what he has to everyone and dispenses his truth to all. Homilies on the Gospel of John 46.1.[20]

No One Comes in Any Other Way. Augustine: Or think of it in this way. When a schoolmaster is the only one in a town, we say loosely, "This person teaches all here to read," not that all learn from him but that he teaches all who do learn. And in the same way we say that God teaches all to come to Christ: not that all do come but that no one comes in any other way. Predestination of the Saints 14.[21]

The Father Taught, the Son Spoke. Augustine: See then how the Father draws; not by laying a necessity on a person but by teaching the truth. See how he draws: "They shall all be taught by God." To draw belongs to God: "Everyone who has heard and has learned of the Father comes to me." What then? If every person who has heard and learned of the Father comes to Christ, has Christ taught nothing here? What if people saw not the Father teaching but the Son? So then, the Father taught and the Son spoke. . . . As I teach you by my word, [the Son says], so the Father teaches by his Word. . . . But the Son himself explains the matter, if we read on: "Not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God, he has seen the Father." . . . This is as if he said: When I tell you, "Everyone that has heard and learned of the Father," do not say to yourselves, We have never seen the Father, so how then can we have learned from him? Hear him then in me [Jesus]. . . . I know the Father and am from him, just as a word is from him who speaks it; that is, not the mere passing sound but that which remains with the speaker and draws the hearer. Tractates on the Gospel of John 26.7-9.[22]

6:46 *Only He Who Is from God Has Seen God*

Only Members of the Godhead Fully See God. Cyril of Jerusalem: The angels behold as much as they can bear, and archangels as much as they are able; and thrones and dominions more than the former, but still less than his worthiness. For with the Son, the Holy Spirit alone can rightly behold him. For "he searches all things and knows even the deep things of God ,"[23] as indeed the only begotten Son also with the Holy Spirit knows the Father fully. "For neither," he says, "does anyone know the Father, except the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him."[24] For he [the Son] fully beholds and reveals God through the Spirit to each person as he is able to receive, since the only begotten Son together with the Holy Spirit is a partaker of the Father's Godhead. He who was begotten knows him who begat. And he who begat knows him who is begotten. Since angels then are ignorant (for the Only Begotten reveals him through the Holy Spirit to each according to his own capacity, as we have said), let no one be ashamed to confess his ignorance. Catechetical Lectures 6.6.[25]

6:47 *One Who Believes Has Eternal Life*

Life Killed Death. Augustine: Our Lord wishes to reveal what he was. He might have said that he who believes in me has me. . . . But what is it "to have me"? It is to have eternal life. Eternal life took death on itself; eternal life willed to die. . . . Life underwent death, that life might kill death. . . . For eternal life is the Word that "in the beginning was with God, and the Word was God, and the life was the light of humanity."[26] The same eternal life gave eternal life also to the flesh that it assumed. He came to die; but on the third day he rose again. Between the Word taking flesh and the flesh rising again, death, which came between, was consumed. Tractates on the Gospel of John 26.10.[27]

---

[20]NPNF 1 14:164**. [21]NPNF 1 5:505**. [22]NPNF 1 7:170-71**. [23]1 Cor 2:10. [24]Mt 11:27. [25]NPNF 2 7:34-35**. [26]See Jn 1:1-4. [27]NPNF 1 7:171**.

6:48 *I Am the Bread of Life*

Sin Has Its Own Special Bread Too. Athanasius: God by his living Word enlivens everyone and gives his Word as food and life to the saints, as the Lord declares, "I am the bread of life." . . . But sin, too, has its own special bread—of death, calling to those who are lovers of pleasure and lack understanding. [Sin] says, "Touch with delight secret bread and sweet waters that are stolen."[28] For one who merely touches them has no idea that what is born from the earth perishes with [sin]. For even when the sinner thinks he is going to find pleasure, the end result of that food is anything but pleasant, as the Wisdom of God again reminds us: "Bread of deceit is pleasant to a person; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel."[29] . . . The end result is, he eats and rejoices for a little while, but afterwards he spurns it the further his soul has moved away [from God]. For the fool does not know that those who depart far from God shall perish.[30] . . . "Leave foolishness behind so that you may live, seek understanding so that you may remain."[31] For the bread of Wisdom is living fruit, as the Lord said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven: if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever ." For when Israel ate of the manna, which was indeed pleasant and wonderful, they still died, and whoever ate it did not live forever as a consequence of eating it; rather, the whole multitude died in the wilderness. . . .

Now wicked people hunger for bread like this, for weak souls will hunger. But the righteous alone, being prepared, shall be satisfied, saying, "I shall behold your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when your glory is seen by me."[32] For he who partakes of divine bread always hungers with desire. And he who hungers in this way has a never-failing gift, as Wisdom promises, saying, "The Lord will not slay the righteous soul with famine."[33] He promises too in the Psalms, "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread."[34] We may also hear our Savior saying, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."[35] It is much more satisfying then for the saints and those who love the life that is in Christ when they elevate themselves to a longing after this food. Festal Letter 7.4-6.[36]

Kneading His Body with Ours. Chrysostom: Those people then at the time of Jesus reaped no fruit from what was said. We, on the other hand, enjoy the benefit in seeing these things truly realized [in the present]. And so, it is necessary to understand the marvel of the mysteries:[37] what they are, why they were given and how they are profitable. We become one body and "members of his flesh and of his bones."[38] Let the initiated follow what I say. In order then that we may become this not only by love, but in action, let us be blended into that flesh. This is effected by the food that he has freely given to us, desiring to show the love that he has for us. This is why he has mixed up himself with us. He has kneaded up his body with ours, so that we might be one distinct entity, like a body joined to a head. For this belongs to those whose love is strong. . . . This is also what Christ has done in order to lead us into a closer friendship and to show his love for us. He has allowed those who desire him not only to see him but even to touch, and eat him, and fix their teeth in his flesh and to embrace him and satisfy all their love. Let us then return from that table like lions breathing fire, having become terrible to the devil, ruminating on our head and on the love that he has shown for us. Homilies on the Gospel of John 46.3.[39]

The Bread of Life Destroys Corruption and Death. Cyril of Alexandria: [Jesus] at length reveals himself to the [children of Israel], saying, "I am the bread of life." He does this so that they may now learn that if they want to get

[28]Prov 9:17. [29]Prov 20:17. He also cites Prov 5:3-4. [30]He cites Jer 2:18; Prov 9:1-5, 6, 18. [31]Prov 9:6. [32]Ps 17:15 (16:15 LXX). [33]Prov 10:3. [34]Ps 132:15 (131:15 LXX). [35]Mt 5:6. [36]NPNF 2 4:525**; NPB 6 1:76. [37]The sacrament. [38]Eph 5:30. [39]NPNF 1 14:166*.

rid of the corruption that rules their lives and avoid the death that fell upon us because of sin, then they must draw near and participate in the only one who is strong enough to save them by destroying corruption and death. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.2.[40]

6:49 *Manna in the Wilderness*

The Advantage of Living Bread. Ambrose: It has been proven that the sacraments of the church are more ancient; now realize that they are more powerful. In very fact it is a marvelous thing that God rained manna on the ancestors and they were fed by daily nourishment from heaven. Therefore, it is said, "Humankind has eaten the bread of angels."[41] And yet all those who ate that bread died in the desert, but this food that you receive, this "living bread, which came down from heaven," furnishes the substance of eternal life, and whoever eats this bread "will not die forever," for it is the body of Christ. On the Mysteries 8.47.[42]

6:50 *The Bread from Heaven Brings Eternal Life*

Christ Is the Bread of the Sacrament. Ephrem the Syrian: There remained yet another act that would abolish that Passover and would become the Passover of the Gentiles, a source of life until the end. Our Lord Jesus took bread[43] in his hands, plain bread at the beginning, and blessed it, made the sign of the cross over it and sanctified it in the name of the Father and in the name of the Spirit, and he broke and distributed it in morsels to his disciples in his kindness. He called the bread his living body, and he filled it with himself and with his Spirit. He stretched forth his hand and gave them the bread that his right hand had sanctified: "Take, eat, all of you[44] of this bread that my word has sanctified. Do not regard as bread what I have given you now . . . eat it, and do not disdain its crumbs. For this bread that I have sanctified is my body. Its least crumb sanctifies thousands of thousands, and it is capable of giving life to all who eat it. Take, eat in faith, doubting not at all that this is my body. And he who eats it in faith eats in it fire and the Spirit.[45] If anyone doubts and eats it, it is plain bread to him. He who believes and eats the bread sanctified in my name, if he is pure, it will keep him pure; if he is a sinner, he will be forgiven. He, however, who despises it or spurns it, he may be sure that he is insulting the Son, who has called the bread his body and truly made it so. Receive of it, eat of it, all of you, and eat in it the Holy Spirit, for it is truly my body, and he who eats it will live forever. This is the heavenly bread that has come down from on high onto the earth. This is the bread that the Israelites ate in the wilderness and did not esteem. The manna that they gathered, which came down to them, was a figure of this spiritual bread that you have now received. Take and eat of it, all of you. In this bread you are eating my body. It is the true source of forgiveness. Memra for the Fifth Day of Great Week (Holy Thursday), Sermon 4.[46]

Worthily Eating of the Body. Augustine: But are we, who eat the bread that comes down from heaven, relieved from death? From visible and carnal death, the death of the body, we are not: we shall die, even as they died. But from spiritual death, which their fathers suffered, we are delivered. Moses and . . . many who were acceptable to God ate the manna and did not die because they understood that visible food in a spiritual sense, spiritually tasted it and were spiritually filled with it. And we too on this day receive the visible food. But the sacrament is one thing, the virtue of the sacrament another. Many a one receives from the altar and perishes in receiving; eating and drinking his own damnation, as the apostle said.[47] . . . To eat the heavenly

[40]LF 43:406**. [41]Ps 78:25 (77:25 LXX). For a fuller discussion of the bread of angels, see Ambrose *On Paradise* 9.42 (FC 42:320-21). [42]FC 44:22-23. See also Ambrose *The Sacraments* 4.5.24 (FC 44:305). [43]Mt 26:26. [44]Mt 26:26. [45]Mt 3:11. [46]MFC 7:139-40. [47]1 Cor 11:29.

bread spiritually then is to bring innocence to the altar. Though your sins are daily, at least let them not be deadly. Before you go to the altar, attend to the prayer you repeat, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." If you forgive, you are forgiven: approach confidently; it is bread, not poison. . . . None then that eat of this bread shall die. Tractates on the Gospel of John 26.11-12.[48]

This Bread Is the Forgiveness of Sins. Ambrose: I [Jesus] was not speaking previously about temporal life or death. Even if someone dies such a death, if he has taken my bread he will live forever. For he who proves himself, takes it.[49] But he who takes it will not die the death of a sinner because this bread is the forgiveness of sins. On the Patriarchs 9.39.[50]

6:51a *The Living Bread from Heaven*

The Perfect Bread from Heaven. Irenaeus: He might easily have come to us in his immortal glory, but in that case we could never have endured the greatness of the glory. Therefore it happened that he, who was the perfect bread of the Father, offered himself to us as milk, [because we were] like infants. He did this when he appeared as a man, that we, being nourished, as it were, from the breast of his flesh, and having, by such a course of milk-nourishment, become accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God, may be able also to contain in ourselves the Bread of immortality, which is the Spirit of the Father. Against Heresies 4.38.1.[51]

A New Spiritual Diet. Clement of Alexandria: God elaborates on a suitable and wholesome new diet for the newly-formed and newborn babe. He says it consists of the one who nourishes and who is the Father of all that are generated and regenerated—just as manna, the celestial food of angels, flowed down from heaven on the ancient Hebrews . . . But when our kind and loving Father rained down the Word, he himself became spiritual nourishment to the good. This is a truly amazing mystery, because . . . this is the kind of diet the Lord administers: he offers his flesh and pours out his blood so that nothing is lacking for his children's growth. This is almost too much to take in! And then we are to throw out the old and carnal corruption, our old diet, receiving in exchange a totally new diet—Christ himself as we ingest him for him to remain hidden there. Then, with our Savior enshrined in our souls, as it were, we can correct the affections of our flesh. Christ the Educator 1.6.[52]

Manna Still Rains Down from Heaven. Ambrose: You asked me why the Lord God does not now rain down manna as he did on our ancestors' people. If you reflect, you will realize that he does, even daily, rain down manna from heaven on his servants. In fact, a corporeal manna is found today in many places, but it is not now a matter of such great wonder, because what is perfect has come.[53] This is the Bread from heaven, the Body from a virgin, of which the gospel sufficiently tells us. How much more excellent this is than what went before! Those who ate that manna, or bread, are dead, but he who eats this Bread will live forever. . . . Whoever experiences this downpour of divine Wisdom is delighted, and, needing no other food, lives not on bread alone but on every word of God.[54] Letter 77.[55]

As Beggars Before God We Ask for Bread. Augustine: You are God's beggar. I mean, we are all God's beggars when we pray. We stand in front of the great householder's gate. In fact we go so far as to prostrate ourselves, we whine and implore, wanting to receive something, and that something is God himself. What does the beggar ask from you? Bread. And you, what do you ask from God, if not Christ, who says, "I am the living bread who came down

[48]NPNF 1 7:171-72**. [49]See 1 Cor 11:28. [50]FC 65:264*. [51]ANF 1:521*. [52]ANF 2:219-20*. [53]1 Cor 13:10. [54]Mt 4:4. [55]FC 26:432*.

from heaven"? Sermon 83.2.[56]

Many Grains Joined Together. Cyprian: The body of the Lord cannot be flour alone or water alone, unless both are united and joined together and compacted in the mass of one bread. In this very sacrament our people are shown to be made one, so that as many grains, collected and ground and mixed together into one mass, make one bread, so also in Christ, who is the heavenly bread, we may know that there is one body with which our number is joined and united. Letter 62.13.[57]

6:51b *The Bread Jesus Gives Is His Flesh*

The Flesh He Gives Is Life Because It Transforms Our Flesh. Cyril of Alexandria: I die (he says) for all, that I may quicken all by myself. And I made my flesh a ransom for the flesh of all. For death shall die in my death, and with me shall rise again (he says) the fallen nature of humankind. This is why I became like you, that is, human and of the seed of Abraham, so that I might be made like in all things to my brothers.[58] . . . For there was no other way for the power of death to be destroyed, as well as death itself, unless Christ gave himself for us as a ransom, one for all, for he was in behalf of all. . . .

Christ therefore gave his own body for the life of all, and again through that body he makes life to dwell in us. Now I will try to tell you how. For since the life-giving Word of God indwelt in the flesh, he transformed it into his own proper good, that is, life, and by the unspeakable character of this union, coming wholly together with it, rendered it life-giving as he himself is by nature. Wherefore the body of Christ gives life to all who partake of it. For it expels death when it comes to be in dying people, and [it] removes corruption, perfectly full, in itself, of the Word which abolishes corruption. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.2.[59]

[56]*WSA* 3 3:382. [57]ANF 5:362*. Augustine cites this same passage of Cyprian in *On Baptism* 7.50. See also the liturgy of the Reformed Dutch communion, which retains his imagery as well. [58]Heb 2:17. [59]LF 43:409-10**.

THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF THE SON OF MAN
JOHN 6:52-59

Overview: Incredulous, the Jews ask how Christ could give them his flesh to eat. Our senses too may struggle to understand Jesus' words, but then let faith confirm that we do indeed receive Christ's body and blood in the sacrament (Cyril of Jerusalem). It is the medicine of immortality (Ignatius), which benefits those in faith. The eternal flesh of Christ is life-giving because the enfleshed Word is present in it (Cyril of Alexandria), along with the Spirit (Philoxenus). This bread is both earthly and heavenly, joining our earthly flesh to divine flesh (Apollinaris) when we eat it, thus giving us eternal life (Irenaeus).

Jesus wants us to know that this is not just a parable or enigmatic saying he has delivered, but that we must really eat the body of Christ (Chrysostom). This real eating also provides real satisfaction (Augustine). We are in God and he is in us when we partake of his true flesh and blood in the sacrament (Hilary). Just as two pieces of wax become one when joined, in the same way, the one who receives the flesh of Christ becomes one with him as we eat and drink life (Cyril of Alexandria).

Christ, as the living image of the Father, says he lives because of the Father (Hilary). He is not saying he is dependent on the Father, so much as that he has his essence from the Father beyond all time and beyond all cause (Gregory of Nazianzus). When he goes on to say that we eat him, this sounds strange; but when we eat Christ we are eating life because he is life (Augustine). We live in Christ because our nature is united to his nature in this eating (Hilary) by which he gives us not only life but also eternal life. Our Lord knew how precious life was in our eyes and so repeats this promise of life often in his Word (Chrysostom) and in the sacrament, which gives us the heavenly bread of immortality (Romanus).

6:52 *How Can This Man Give Us His Flesh to Eat?*

Let Faith Confirm You. Cyril of Jerusalem: Failing to understand his words spiritually, [the Jews] were offended and drew back, thinking that the Savior was urging them to cannibalism. Then again in the old covenant there was the showbread. But that, since it belonged to the old covenant, has come to an end. In the new covenant there are the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation, which sanctify body and soul. For as bread corresponds to the body, so the Word is appropriate to the soul. So do not think of them as mere bread and wine. In accordance with the Lord's declaration, they are body and blood. And if our senses suggests otherwise, let faith confirm you. Do not judge the issue on the basis of taste, but on the basis of faith be assured beyond all doubt that you have been allowed to receive the body and blood of Christ. Mystagogical Lectures 4.4-6.[1]

6:53 *No Life Without the Flesh and Blood of the Son of Man*

The Medicine of Immortality. Ignatius of Antioch: Come together in common one and all without exception in charity, in one faith and in one Jesus Christ, who is of the race of David according to the flesh, the Son of man and Son of God . . . and break one bread, which is the medicine of immortality and the antidote against death, enabling us to live forever in Jesus Christ. Epistle to the Ephesians 20.[2]

The Mystery Is Revealed to Those Who Believe. Cyril of Alexandria: How he will give them his flesh to eat he does not yet tell them, for he knew they were in darkness and would never in that state be able to understand what is ineffable. . . . But the power of learning suitably follows on those who believe. . . . It was therefore right that faith should first be rooted in them before understanding. . . . And it is for this reason (I suppose) that the Lord refrained from telling them how he would give them his flesh to

[1]*DECT* 188-89*; SC 126:139. [2]FC 1:95. See also Justin Martyr *Apology* 1.65-67.

eat, calling them to believe before they seek. For those who believed, however, he broke bread and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body."[3] . . . Do you see how he does not explain the mystery to those who had senselessly rejected the faith without investigation? But, to those who believe, he declares it most clearly. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.2.[4]

6:54 *Jesus' Flesh and Blood Are for Eternal Life*

The Enfleshed Word Is Life. Cyril of Alexandria: Whoever eats the holy flesh of Christ has eternal life because his flesh has the Word which by nature is life. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.2.[5]

Within the One Who Partakes. Philoxenus of Mabbug: Now, in as much as a sinner receives our Lord's body and blood in faith, he is in our Lord, and our Lord is in him, as our Lord himself says. Where the Lord dwells, there is his Spirit too. On the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.[6]

Joined to All Flesh, He Gives Life. Apollinaris of Laodicea: One cannot benefit from the Word of God for eternal life, except through his flesh. For until he was joined to the flesh, all flesh was held under the power of death. But now his life-giving flesh has been given. It nourishes the whole human race to life through the power suspended in it and joined in likeness to those who share the same physical nature. Fragments on John 28.[7]

Earthly and Heavenly Bread. Irenaeus: For we offer to him his own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread that is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly, so also our bodies when they receive the Eucharist are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity. Against Heresies 4.18.5.[8]

6:55 *True Food and Drink*

Real Eating. Chrysostom: Either he means to say that the true food was he who saved the soul. Or, he means to assure them that what he had said was no mere enigma or parable but that you must really eat the body of Christ. Homilies on the Gospel of John 47.1.[9]

Real Satisfaction. Augustine: Or think of it this way: Whereas people desire meat and drink to satisfy hunger and thirst, real satisfaction is produced only by that meat and drink that make the receivers of it immortal and incorruptible. He's talking here about the fellowship of the saints where there is peace and unity, full and perfect. Therefore . . . our Lord has chosen for the types of his body and blood things that become one out of many. Bread is a quantity of grains united into one mass, wine a quantity of grapes squeezed together. Then he explains what it is to eat his body and drink his blood: "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I in him." So then to partake of that meat and that drink is to dwell in Christ and Christ in you. Whoever does not dwell in Christ, and in whom Christ does not dwell, neither eats his flesh nor drinks his blood; rather, he eats and drinks the sacrament of it to his own damnation. Tractates on the Gospel of John 26.17-18.[10]

We Are One, Because the Father Is in Christ and Christ in Us. Hilary of Poitiers: If in truth the Word has been made flesh

[3]Mt 26:26. [4]LF 43:417-18**. See also Augustine *Sermon* 228B.3 (*WSA* 3 6:262). [5]LF 43:420-21*. [6]CS 101:125*. Theodore of Heraclea *Fragments on John* 38 (*JKGK* 75) speaks allegorically of the proclamation of the gospel as the flesh that is seen by all, but the blood is the true understanding of the gospel that is hidden like veins and capillaries under the flesh of the proclamation. [7]*JKGK* 13. [8]ANF 1:486. See also *Against Heresies* 5.2.2-3. [9]NPNF 1 14:168*. [10]NPNF 1 7:173**.

and we in very truth receive the Word made flesh as food from the Lord, are we not bound to believe that he abides in us naturally? [Jesus], born as a man, has assumed the nature of our flesh now inseparable from himself and has joined together the nature of his own flesh to the nature of the eternal Godhead in the sacrament by which his flesh is communicated to us. For in this way we are all one because the Father is in Christ and Christ is in us. . . . And so, if indeed Christ has taken to himself the flesh of our body, and that man who was born from Mary was indeed Christ, and we indeed receive in a mystery the flesh of his body—and because of this we shall be one, because the Father is in him and he in us—how can a unity of will be maintained, seeing that the special property of nature received through the sacrament is the sacrament of a perfect unity? . . .

As to what we say concerning the reality of Christ's nature within us, unless we have been taught by him our words are foolish and impious. For he says himself, "My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them." As to the verity of the flesh and blood there is no room left for doubt. For now, both from the declaration of the Lord himself and our own faith, it is truly flesh and truly blood. And these when eaten and drunk enable both that we are in Christ and Christ is in us. Is this not true? Yet those who affirm that Christ Jesus is not truly God are welcome to find it false. He therefore himself is in us through the flesh and we are in him, while together with him our own selves are in God. On the Trinity 8.13-14.[11]

6:56 *Jesus' Flesh and Blood Unite Us*

One with Christ. Cyril of Alexandria: If one joins two pieces of wax, one will see that one has become part of the other. In a similar manner, I suppose, the person who receives the flesh of our Savior Christ and drinks his precious blood . . . shall be one with him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.2.[12]

Eat and Drink of the One Who Is Life. Cyril of Alexandria: O sublime condescension! The Creator gives himself to his creatures for their delight. Life bestows itself on mortals as food and drink. "Come, eat my body," he exhorts us, "and drink the wine I have mingled for you. I have prepared myself as food. I have mingled myself for those who desire me. Of my own will I became flesh and have become a partaker of your flesh and blood. . . . Eat of me as I am life, and live, for this is what I desire. . . . Eat my bread, for I am the life-giving grain of the wheat, and I am the bread of life. Drink the wine I have mingled for you, for I am the draught of immortality. . . . I am the true vine;[13] drink my joy, the wine that I have mingled for you.[14] Meditation on the Mystical Supper 10.[15]

6:57 *The Living Father Sent Christ*

Christ Is the Living Image of the Living. Hilary of Poitiers: Can lifeless copies be put on a level with their living originals? Can painted or carved or molten effigies be put on a level with the nature that they imitate? The Son is not the image of the Father after such a fashion as this; he is the living image of the Living. The Son who is born of the Father has a nature in no way different from his. And, because his nature is not different, he possesses the power of the nature that is the same as his own. The fact that he is the image proves that God the Father is the author of the birth of the Only Begotten, who is himself revealed as the likeness and image of the invisible God. And hence the likeness, which is joined in union with the divine nature, is indelibly his own because the powers of that nature are inalienably his own. On the Trinity 7.37.[16]

The Shared Being of the Father and the Son. Gregory of Nazianzus: All things that

[11]NPNF 2 9:141*. See also Ambrose *On the Mysteries* 6.1.1. [12]LF 43:422**. [13]Jn 15:1. [14]Prov 9:5. [15]*SSGF* 3:155-57**; PG 77:1017D, 1020C, 1021A. [16]NPNF 2 9:134*.

the Father has are the Son's.[17] On the other hand, all that belongs to the Son is the Father's. Nothing then is unique to either one, because all things are in common. For their being [essence] itself is common and equal, even though the Son receives it from the Father. It is in this respect . . . that it is said, "I live by the Father," not as though his life and being were kept together by the Father but because he has his being from him beyond all time and beyond all cause. On the Son, Theological Oration 4(30).11.[18]

To Eat Christ? Augustine: The Lord and master was inviting his slaves, and the food he had prepared for them was himself. Who would ever dare to eat his own Lord and master? And yet he said, "Whoever eats me lives because of me." When Christ is eaten, life is eaten. Nor is he killed in order to be eaten, but he brings life to the dead. When he is eaten, he nourishes without diminishing. So do not be afraid, brothers and sisters, of eating this bread, in case we should possibly finish it and find nothing to eat later on. Let Christ be eaten; when eaten he lives because when slain he rose again. Sermon 132a.1.[19]

Christ Has the Father Within Himself. Hilary of Poitiers: So then he lives through the Father, and just as he lives through the Father we live through his flesh. For all comparison is chosen to shape our understanding so that we may grasp the subject we are treating with the help of the analogy set before us. Christ dwelling within our carnal selves through the flesh is the reason we have life, and we shall live through him in the same way as he lives through the Father. If, then, we live naturally through him according to the flesh, that is, if we have partaken of the nature of his flesh, must not Christ naturally have the Father within himself according to the Spirit since he himself lives through the Father? And he lives through the Father because his birth has not implanted in him an alien and different nature. This is because his very being is from the Father yet is not divided from the Father by any barrier of an unlikeness of nature because within himself he has the Father through the birth in the power of the nature. On the Trinity 8.16.[20]

Not Only Life, but Eternal Life. Chrysostom: The "life" of which he speaks here is not merely life but the excellent[21] life. For it is clear from this that he spoke not simply of life but of that glorious and ineffable life. For everyone lives, even unbelievers and the uninitiated who do not eat of that flesh. . . . And he is not speaking of the general resurrection either (for all alike rise again), but he is speaking of that special, glorious resurrection that has a reward. Homilies on the Gospel of John 47.1.[22]

6:58-59 *Eat This Bread and Live Forever*

Length of Life versus Life Without End. Chrysostom: If it was possible without harvest or fruit of the earth, or any such thing, to preserve the lives of the Israelites of old for forty years, much more will he be able to do this, having come for a greater purpose. . . . He knew how precious a thing life was in people's eyes, and therefore he repeats his promise of life often, just as the Old Testament had done. But the Old Testament only offered long life, whereas he offers life without end. This promise was an abolition of that sentence of death that sin had brought on us. . . . He said these things in the synagogue as he taught in Capernaum, where many displays of his power took place. . . . He taught in the synagogue and in the temple, with the intention of attracting the multitude and as a sign that he was not acting in opposition to the Father. Homilies on the Gospel of John 47.1-2.[23]

[17]Jn 16:15. [18]NPNF 2 7:313. Basil solves the dilemma differently in *Against Eunomius* 4 (NPNF 2 8:xxxviii; PG 29:693-96) by inferring that the words must be referring to the incarnation, and not to the Godhead. [19]*WSA* 3 4:329*. [20]NPNF 2 9:142**. See also Ambrose *On the Christian Faith* 4.10.135. [21]Gk *eudokimon.* [22]NPNF 1 14:168**. [23]NPNF 1 14:169**.

The Heavenly Bread of Immortality.
Romanus Melodus:

All the angels on high marvel at the affairs of earth
For earth-born men dwelling here below
Are exalted in spirit and reach what is on high
As they share in Christ, crucified.[24]
For all together partake of His body,
As they eagerly come to the bread of life,
They hope for eternal salvation from it.
Even though visibly, to all appearances, it is bread
It sanctifies them spiritually because it is
The heavenly bread of immortality.

That the bread which we take is the flesh of the Immanuel,
The Master Himself was the first to teach us;
For when He voluntarily went to His Passion,
Christ broke the bread of salvation,[25]
And said to His apostles, as it is written:
"Now draw near; eat of this,
And eating, you will receive eternal life,
For this is my flesh, this food,
Since really, I whom you behold, am
The heavenly bread of immortality.

We all know, we who possess complete faith in Christ,
That as we approach, eager for the mystic bread
And in addition take the cup of salvation,
If we are of pure heart and without dissimulation
We are all participants of the flesh and blood
Of Christ with faith in Him, and we hope
From this a life like that of the angels;
For, in very truth, the body of the One who suffered,
The very holy body of Jesus Christ is
The heavenly bread of immortality.

Kontakion on the Multiplication of Loaves 13.1-3.[26]

[24]Heb 3:14. [25]Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-25. [26]*KRBM* 1:129-30.

THE DESERTION OF MANY DISCIPLES JOHN 6:60-71

Overview: When the disciples hear all of this, they have difficulty perceiving any deeper meaning, and if this is their perception, what would his enemies think (Augustine)? Perhaps part of the reason they ask, "Who can bear it?" is that they are beginning to look for excuses to leave (Chrysostom). Nevertheless, Jesus goes further in speaking of the ascension of the Son of man to where he was before, which can make sense only if we realize that the Son of God and the Son of man are one Christ according to the unity of the person (Augustine).

When Jesus opposes spirit to flesh here, he is not denigrating the flesh but revealing that it is the Spirit who gives life (Tertullian). Flesh has great value when joined to the Spirit; otherwise, the Word would not have become flesh to dwell among us (Augustine). Christ is the fount of the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit is, there is life (Ambrose). The words he spoke to his disciples are spirit, that is, both spiritual and of the Spirit. Flesh is understood and believed to be the temple of the Word and is thus a channel of sanctification and life, not altogether of itself but through God, who has been made one with our flesh in Christ (Cyril of Alexandria).

Jesus already knew what was on the minds of his enemies and knows what is on our minds too (Hilary). This is why the very act of believing is itself a gift and not of merit, as the Father sometimes has to "drag" us to Christ (Augustine). The truth he spoke to them was hard to hear, as it always has been and always will be (Jerome). But it also helped show who truly sought to follow him and who were only pretenders to the faith, those whom John wrote about in his first epistle (Tertullian). Many of the disciples began distancing themselves from Jesus, and so he asks a probing question of the Twelve to discern their motivation for staying with him (Chrysostom). He does not compel them to stay, however (Athanasius). It is as though he were saying to them, It is not the number of disciples that matters, but rather their faithfulness. Peter responds to our Lord's question of leaving by asking, "To whom shall we go?" implying who or what could possibly be better to follow than their Lord, as Israel also learned. When they followed him, they were safe; when they left him or set out on their own, they were lost (Cyril of Alexandria). Peter also confesses that life is found only in Christ, confessing the resurrection even before the event because he had taken to heart the Lord's teaching (Chrysostom). He believed and then knew that in the flesh and blood that Christ gives there is eternal life (Augustine).

Jesus asks about having chosen twelve, a number significant enough that, after his betrayal, Judas is replaced (Augustine). But he does not expose Judas's actions for the moment, although he lets Judas know that he knows what Judas is doing (Chrysostom), even if none of the other disciples know what he is talking about. This leads the disciples to more careful introspection of their own motivations (Cyril of Alexandria). We learn from Jesus' treatment of Judas that God can take what was meant for evil and turn even that into good (Augustine).

6:60 *What Jesus Says Is a Great Mystery*

The People Do Not Perceive the Deeper Meaning. Augustine: If his disciples considered this a hard saying, what must his enemies have thought? But it was necessary that there would be some things that should not be understood by all. The secret of God should make people more eager and attentive, not hostile. . . . But the people did not perceive that what he said had a deeper meaning or that grace went along with it. Rather, receiving the matter in their own way and taking his words in a human sense, they understood him as if he spoke of the cutting of the flesh of the Word into pieces for distribution to those who believed on him. Tractates on the Gospel of John 27.2.[1]

Looking for an Excuse to Leave. Chrysos-

[1]NPNF 1 7:174**.

tom: They thought he spoke above himself, and more highly than he had a right to do. And so they said, "Who can bear it?" Perhaps they were making excuses for themselves since they were about to leave him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 47.2.[2]

6:62 *The Son of Man Ascending to His Previous Place*

Son of God Always, Son of Man in Time. Augustine: For the Son of man is Christ, of the Virgin Mary. Therefore the Son of man began to be here on earth where he took on himself flesh from the earth. For this reason, in prophecy it had been said, "Truth has arisen out of the earth."[3] What, then, does it mean, "When you see the Son of man ascending where he was before"? For there would be no question if he had said it this way: "If you should see the Son of God ascending where he was before." But when he said "the Son of man ascending where he was before," was the Son of man in heaven before the time when he began to be on earth? Here he said, "Where he was before," as if then he were not there when he was speaking these words. But in another place he said, "No man has ascended into heaven except he who has descended from heaven: the Son of man who is in heaven."[4] He did not say "was," but he said, "The Son of man who *is* in heaven." He was speaking on earth and said he was in heaven. And he did not say it this way: "No one has ascended into heaven except he who has descended from heaven; the Son of God who is in heaven."

Where does this lead except that we understand—as also in my previous sermon I showed you,[5] my beloved people—that Christ, God and man is one person, not two? In this way our faith is only a Trinity and not a quaternity. Therefore Christ is one, the Word, soul and flesh, one Christ; the Son of God and the Son of man, one Christ. The Son of God always, the Son of man in time, nevertheless, one Christ according to the unity of the person. He was in heaven when he was speaking on earth. So the Son of man was in heaven as the Son of God was on earth. The Son of God was on earth in the flesh he had taken, the Son of man was in heaven in the unity of person. Tractates on the Gospel of John 27.4.1-2.[6]

6:63 *The Spirit Gives Life*

Only the Spirit Can Give Life. Tertullian: If he says that "the flesh profits nothing," then the meaning must take direction from the context of that remark. For seeing that they regarded his speech as hard and unbearable, as though he had really prescribed his flesh for them to eat, since his purpose was to assign the establishment of salvation to the Spirit, he first said, "It is the spirit that gives life," and only then added, "the flesh profits nothing"—toward the giving of life, of course. He also proceeds to state how he wishes "the Spirit" to be understood. "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." . . . And so, when establishing his teaching as the Life-giver (because the Word is spirit and life), he also said that it is his flesh, because the Word also was made flesh.[7] We ought therefore to desire him in order that we may have life. We ought to devour him with the ear, and to ruminate on him with the mind and to digest him by faith. On the Resurrection of the Flesh 37.[8]

Flesh Enlivened by the Spirit Has Great Value. Augustine: What, then, does it mean, "the flesh profits nothing"? It profits nothing, but [only] as they understood it. For, of course, they understood flesh as [something that] is torn to pieces in a carcass or sold in a meat market, not as [something that] is enlivened by a spirit. And so it was said, "The flesh profits nothing." . . . But he is talking there about that flesh that is alone by itself. Let spirit be added to flesh . . . and it profits very

[2]NPNF 1 14:169**. [3]See Ps 84:12 LXX. [4]Jn 3:13. [5]Cf. *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 26.19. [6]FC 79:279*. [7]Jn 1:14. [8]*TTR* 103*. See also *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 50 and Basil *Letter* 159.2 (NPNF 2 8:212).

much. For if flesh profited nothing, the Word would not have become flesh to dwell among us.[9] Tractates on the Gospel of John 27.5.1.[10]

Where Life Is, the Spirit Is. Ambrose: Learn now that as the Father is the Fount of life, so, too, many have stated that the Son is signified as the Fount of life.[11] This is why he says that with you, almighty God, your Son is the Fount of life. That is the Fount of the Holy Spirit, for the Spirit is life, as the Lord says: "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life," for where the Spirit is, there also is life. And where life is, there is also the Holy Spirit. On the Holy Spirit 1.15.172.[12]

Life-Giving Words. Cyril of Alexandria: [In this passage Christ is saying,] "It is not the nature of the flesh that renders the Spirit life-giving but the might of the Spirit that makes the body life-giving. The words then that I have spoken with you are spirit, that, is both spiritual and of the Spirit, and they are life." Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.3.[13]

The Word Sanctifies the Flesh. Cyril of Alexandria: Even the body of Christ itself was sanctified by the power of the Word made one with it, and it is thus endowed with living force in the blessed Eucharist so that is it able to implant in us its sanctifying grace. . . . For here too he says that the flesh can profit nothing, that is, to sanctify and quicken those who receive it, insofar as it is mere human flesh. But when flesh is understood and believed to be the temple of the Word, then surely it will be a channel of sanctification and life, not altogether of itself but through God who has been made one with it, who is holy and life.[14] Commentary on the Gospel of John 11.9.[15]

6:64 *Jesus Knew Who Did Not Believe and Who Would Betray Him*

Jesus Knows Our Thoughts. Hilary of Poitiers: Jesus Christ knows the thoughts of the mind, as it is now, stirred by present motives, and as it will be tomorrow, aroused by the impulse of future desires. . . . By its virtue his nature could perceive the unborn future and foresee the awakening of passions yet dormant in the mind. Do you believe that it did not know what is through itself and within itself? He is Lord of all that belongs to others; is he not Lord of his own? On the Trinity 9.59.[16]

6:65 *One Who Is Granted by the Father Comes to the Son*

Faith Is a Gift. Augustine: He teaches us that even the act of believing is by way of being a gift and not a matter of merit: "As I told you," he says, "no one can come to me but whoever has been given it by my Father." If we call to mind the earlier part of the Gospel, we shall discover where the Lord said this. We shall find that he said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me drags him."[17] He did not say "leads" but "drags." This violence happens to the heart, not to the flesh. So why be surprised? Believe, and you come; love, and you are dragged. Do not regard this violence as harsh and irksome; on the contrary, it is sweet and pleasant. It is the very pleasantness of the thing that drags you to it. Isn't a sheep dragged, or drawn irresistibly, when it is hungry and grass is shown to it? And I presume it is not being moved by bodily force but pulled by desire.[18] Sermon 131.2.[19]

6:66 *Many of Jesus' Disciples Left Him*

Truth Is Not Easy to Speak or Hear. Jerome: The medical men called surgeons pass for being cruel but really deserve pity. For is it not pitiful to cut away the dead flesh of another person with merciless knives without being moved by his pain? Is it not pitiful that the one who is

[9]See Jn 1:14. [10]FC 79:280*. [11]Ps 36:9 (35:10 LXX). [12]NPNF 2 10:113*. [13]LF 43:437**. [14]See also Cyril's excursus on Jn 17:13. [15]LF 48:523-24*. [16]NPNF 2 9:176. [17]Jn 6:44; Lat *traho* = "to draw" or in a stronger sense "to drag." [18]An argument Augustine often used against Pelagius. [19]*WSA* 3 4:317*.

curing the patient is callous to his sufferings and has to appear as his enemy? Yet this is the order of nature. While truth is always bitter, a pleasant disposition waits upon evildoing. Isaiah goes naked without blushing as a type of the captivity to come.[20] Jeremiah is sent from Jerusalem to the Euphrates (a river in Mesopotamia) and leaves his girdle to be marred in the Chaldean camp among the Assyrians hostile to his people. [21] Ezekiel is told to eat bread made of mingled seeds and sprinkled with the dung of people and cattle.[22] He has to see his wife die without shedding a tear.[23] Amos is driven from Samaria.[24] Why is he driven from it? Surely in this case, as in the others, because he was a spiritual surgeon who cut away the parts diseased by sin and urged people to repentance. The apostle Paul says, "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"[25] The Savior himself found it no different. Many of the disciples left him because his sayings seemed hard. Letter 40.1.[26]

No Room for Fickle Faith. Tertullian: Let the chaff of a fickle faith fly off as much as it will at every blast of temptation, all the purer will be that heap of corn that shall be laid up in the garner of the Lord. Did not certain of the disciples turn back from the Lord himself when they were offended? Yet the rest did not therefore think that they must turn away from following him. But because they knew that he was the Word of Life and had come from God, they continued in his company to the very last, after he had gently inquired of them whether they also would go away. It is a comparatively small thing that certain men, like Phygelus, and Hermogenes, and Philetus and Hymenaeus, deserted his apostle:[27] the betrayer of Christ was himself one of the apostles. We are surprised at seeing his churches forsaken by some people, although the things that we suffer after the example of Christ himself show us to be Christians. "They went out from us," says [John], "but they were not of us. If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."[28] Prescriptions Against Heretics 3.[29]

6:67 *Jesus Challenged the Twelve*

The Question Probes Their Motives. Chrysostom: Had he praised them, they would naturally, as people do, have thought that they were conferring a favor on Christ by not leaving him. By showing, as he did, that he did not need their company, he made them stick all the more closely to him. He does not say, however, "Go away," as this would have been to cast them off. Rather, he asks whether they wanted to go away. In this way, he prevented them from staying with him out of any feeling of shame or compulsion. Homilies on the Gospel of John 47.3.[30]

No Compulsion. Athanasius: For it is the part of true godliness not to compel but to persuade. Our Lord himself does not employ force but offers the choice, saying to everyone, "If anyone will follow after me, "[31] and to his disciples in particular, "Will you also go away?" History of the Arians 8.67.[32]

How Many Faithful. Cyril of Alexandria: For it is not the number of worshipers but rather those who excel in the right faith, though they are few, that are precious in the sight of God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.3.[33]

6:68 *Peter Believed in the Words of Eternal Life*

Who Could Be Any Better to Follow? Cyril of Alexandria: "To whom shall we go?" Peter asks. In other words, "Who else will instruct us the way you do?" or "To whom shall we go to find anything better?" "You have the words of eternal life"; not hard words, as those other disciples say, but words that will bring us to the

[20]Is 20:2. [21]Jer 13:6-7. [22]Ezek 4:9-16. [23]Ezek 24:15-18. [24]Amos 7:12-13. [25]Gal 4:16. [26]NPNF 2 6:54*. [27]2 Tim 1:15; 2:17; 1 Tim 1:20. [28]1 Jn 2:19. [29]ANF 3:244*. [30]NPNF 1 14:170-71*. [31]Mt 16:24. [32]NPNF 2 4:295**. See Chrysostom *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 47.4. [33]LF 43:442*. Cyril also sees an implicit threat in Jesus' words that the disciples must remain faithful.

loftiest goal, unceasing, endless life removed from all corruption. These words surely make quite obvious to us the necessity for sitting at the feet of Christ, taking him as our one and only teacher and giving him our constant and undivided attention. He must be our guide who knows well how to lead us to everlasting life. In this way, we shall ascend to the divine court of heaven, and entering the church of the firstborn, delight in blessings passing all human understanding.

It is entirely self-evident that the desire to follow Christ alone and to be with him always is a good thing leading to our salvation. And yet, we can learn this from the Old Testament as well. When the Israelites had shaken off Egyptian tyranny and were hurrying toward the promised land, God did not allow them to march in disorder. The lawgiver [Moses] did not let each one go where he wanted to since, without a guide, they should undoubtedly have lost the way completely.[34] . . . They were ordered to follow: to set out with the cloud, to stop with the cloud and to rest with the cloud. When they stayed with their guide, then it was the Israelites' salvation, just as not leaving Christ is ours now. For he was with those people of old under the form of the tabernacle, the cloud and the fire. . . .

They were commanded to follow and not undertake the journey on their own initiative. They were to set out with the tabernacle and stop with it, that by this symbol you might understand Christ's words: "Whoever serves me must follow me, so as to be with me wherever I am."[35] When you are always in his company, it means you are resolute in following him and constant in holding on to him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.4.[36]

Peter Confesses the Resurrection. Chrysostom: [Peter's was] a speech of the greatest love, proving that Christ was more precious to them than father or mother. And that it might not seem to be said as a result of thinking that there was no one whose guidance they could look to, he adds, "You have the words of eternal life." . . . These men already confessed the resurrection and all the apportionment that shall happen there. Homilies on the Gospel of John 47.3.[37]

6:69 *The Twelve Believe and Know Jesus Is the Christ*[38]

We Believe in Order to Know. Augustine: For we believed in order to know. Had we wanted first to know and then to believe, we could never have been able to believe. What have we believed and known? "That you are the Christ the Son of God," that is, that you are eternal life and that in your flesh and blood you give what you are yourself. Tractate on the Gospel of John 27.9.[39]

6:70 *One of the Twelve Is a Devil*

Twelve a Sacred Number. Augustine: In "Have I not chosen you twelve," . . . twelve seems to be a sacred number used in the case of those who were to spread the doctrine of the Trinity through the four quarters of the world. That is the reason of the three times four [which equals twelve]. Judas, then, only cut himself off. He did not profane the number twelve. He abandoned his teacher, for God appointed a successor to take his place. Tractates on the Gospel of John 27.10.[40]

Christ Neither Exposes Nor Sanctions Judas. Chrysostom: See the wisdom of Christ. He neither exposes the traitor nor allows him to remain hidden. In this way, [Judas] is not so publicly humiliated that he becomes more contentious, but Christ also does not embolden him by allowing him to think that his wicked deeds are proceeding undetected. Homilies on the Gospel of John 47.4.[41]

---

[34]Cyril then quotes Num 9:15-18 LXX. [35]Jn 12:26. [36]LF 43:444-46**. [37]NPNF 1 14:171*. [38]Many of the patristic writers commented using this variant: "the Christ." [39]NPNF 1 7:177**. [40]NPNF 1 7:177**. [41]NPNF 1 14:171**.

Who Will Betray Jesus? Cyril of Alexandria: By this severe scolding Jesus rouses each one [of his disciples] to profitable vigilance and renders them more steadfast in faith. For he does not say clearly who shall betray him, but rather, by laying the burden of iniquity on one of the disciples, without saying whom, Jesus brought them all to the contest. And so, with each one dreading the loss of his own soul, Jesus invites them to more careful circumspection. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.4.[42]

Good Produced from Evil. Augustine: Evil people make evil use of all the good creations of God. Good people, on the other hand, make good use of the evil actions of the wicked. And who is as good as the one and only God?[43] . . . For as the wicked turn the good works of God to an evil use, so inversely God turns the evil works of human beings to good. What can be worse than what Judas did? He was chosen as the treasurer among the Twelve who would dispense gifts to the poor. But instead of being thankful for so great an honor and favor, he took the money and lost righteousness. Being dead, he betrayed life. The one he followed as a disciple he betrayed as an enemy. Yet our Lord made a good use of his wickedness, allowing himself to be betrayed so that he might redeem us. . . . If God employs the evil works of the devil himself for good, whatever the evil person does by making bad use of God's good gifts only hurts himself. It in no way contradicts the goodness of God. Tractates on the Gospel of John 27.10.[44]

[42]LF 43:457**. [43]See Mk 10:10. [44]NPNF 1 7:177**.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES AND THE PLOT OF THE JEWS JOHN 7:1-9

Overview: Jesus' journey to the Gentiles should have served as a warning to those who opposed him (Cyril of Alexandria). Five months have now passed since the miracle of the loaves, and the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles is near (Chrysostom). The people would travel to Jerusalem for the festival and set up tents around the city in commemoration of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness when they had lived in tents (Augustine). It was a type, pointing toward the time when all the

saints who will be gathered from the whole world will come to the heavenly Jerusalem, pitching their tabernacles, that is, their bodies, which are only temporary dwellings as they receive their eternal ones (Cyril of Alexandria). Jesus' brothers want him to go up to the festival in Jerusalem so they can share the limelight with him (Theodore), demonstrating their own lack of faith and understanding of who he is (Tertullian).

Jesus is not seeking their kind of glory, and so he tells them that his time has not yet come for either that kind of glory or the humility he knew was coming (Augustine). His brothers chafe at his reproof, much as we do when we are disciplined (Cyril of Alexandria). Jesus does not want to reveal himself immediately by going up to the feast publicly, because now was not the time for feasting (Apollinaris). He reiterates that his time has not yet come because it was at the next Passover that he would be crucified (Chrysostom). He also knew that he was inaugurating a perpetual feast that would not be limited to one day (Augustine).

7:1 *Jesus Avoids Judea*

Jesus Goes to Those Who Do Not Reject Him. Cyril of Alexandria: Christ's departure to the Gentiles served as a message to those who sought to kill him: If they did not cease their mad foolishness of persecuting and destroying their benefactor, Christ would give himself completely to the outsider and depart to the Gentiles. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.5.[1]

7:2 *The Feast of Tabernacles*

Five Months Later. Chrysostom: It appears here that a considerable time had passed since the last events. For when our Lord sat upon the mount, it was near the feast of the Passover, and now, it is the Feast of Tabernacles. In the five intermediate months, then, the Evangelist has related nothing but the miracle of the loaves and the conversation with those who ate of them. As our Lord was unceasingly working miracles and holding disputes with people . . . the Evangelists could not relate all [events] but only aimed at giving those in which complaint or opposition had followed on the part of the Jews, as was the case here. Homilies on the Gospel of John 48.1.[2]

The Commemoration of the Feast. Augustine: What the Feast of Tabernacles is, we read in the Scriptures. They used to make tents during the festival, like those in which they lived during their journey in the desert, after their departure from Egypt.[3] Tractates on the Gospel of John 28.3.[4]

Feast of Tabernacles As Type. Cyril of Alexandria: The law of Moses commanded that the Jews should hurry to Jerusalem from the surrounding countryside to celebrate there in a type the Feast of Tabernacles.[5] And the spiritual person will from this perceive the gathering together of all the saints into Christ when they shall be brought together from the whole world after the resurrection of the dead to the city that is above, the heavenly Jerusalem, there to offer the thank offerings of the true pitching of tabernacles, that is, of the framing and permanence of bodies, corruption having been destroyed and death fallen into death. Commentary on the Gospel of John 3.4.[6]

7:3 *Jesus' Brothers Urge Him to Go to Judea*

Jesus' Brothers Want to Share Limelight. Theodore of Mopsuestia: His brothers, being led by their human thoughts, spoke these words to him. They wanted him to reveal himself before everybody through his signs so that they might also be glorified through him. They did not possess a perfect faith in him if

[1]LF 43:459**. [2]NPNF 1 14:173**. [3]Lev 23:33-43. [4]NPNF 1 7:179**. [5]Cyril is here commenting on Jn 6, but his reference to the Feast of Tabernacles instead of the "feast of the Jews" there shows either a textual problem or that he saw the two events as contemporaneous. [6]LF 43:314*.

they believed that he needed to reveal himself completely before everybody concerning the nature hidden in him and that he had to be exalted over everybody. Commentary on John 3 (7:1-5).[7]

7:4-5 *Jesus' Brothers Did Not Believe in Him*

The Disrespect of Jesus' Relatives. Tertullian: Jesus was teaching the way of life, preaching the kingdom of God and actively engaged in healing infirmities of body and soul. But all that time, while strangers were keenly interested in him, his closest relatives were absent. By and by they turn up and keep outside, but they do not go in, because they did not think much of what was going on within. They do not even wait, as if they had something that they could contribute more necessary than that which he was so earnestly doing; rather, they prefer to interrupt him and to call him away from his great task. On the Flesh of Christ 7.[8]

7:6 *Jesus' Response to His Brothers*

The Time for Glory Is Not Yet Come. Augustine: They advised him to pursue glory and not allow himself to remain in concealment and obscurity, appealing to altogether worldly and secular motives. . . . But our Lord was laying down another road to that very exaltation, that is, humility. . . . "My time," he says, that is, the time of my glory when I shall come to judge on high is not yet come; but your time, that is, the glory of the world, is always ready. . . . And let us, who are the Lord's body, when insulted by the lovers of this world, say, your time is ready: ours is not yet come. Tractates on the Gospel of John 28.5-7.[9]

7:7 *The World Hates Jesus*

Reproof Naturally Brings Hatred. Cyril of Alexandria: The Savior very kindly reproves his brothers who are still too worldly-minded and disposed. And so, he brings forward a second skillful defense whereby he shows not only that they are ignorant of who he is by nature but that they are still so far removed from love toward him that they choose to live in a way conformed to those who admire living in the world instead of cultivating virtue. . . . [He says to them]: The world does not hate you (for you still savor that which is of it), but it hates me, nor does it take kindly to its being accused by me for its unseemly actions. Therefore, you go up safely to the feast, but I will not because I shall surely dispute with them and, being present, tell them what is for their own good. However, reproof is bitter to lovers of pleasure and good for kindling wrath in the one that receives it without a sober mind. . . .

For the world loves sin. The Lord is a corrector of those who do not act rightly. And correction must often be attained by reproof. For the mere calling of a sin a sin is already a rebuke to those who love that sin, and the reproof of iniquity already lays blame on those who have that iniquity. And so, when necessity calls for the teacher to administer reproof, and the mode of cure requires it to happen in this way, and the one being instructed by such a rebuke against his will is exceedingly angry, then the ills of hatred must surely arise. Therefore, the Savior says that he is hated by the world in that it cannot yet bear exhortation with rebuke when it really needs to do so in order to profit from it. For the mind that is in bondage to evil pleasures gets quite angry with the advice that would persuade it to shape up. And the Savior says these things, not altogether saying that he will not go to Jerusalem or refusing to give the reproofs that may be profitable to the sinners, but minded to do this too and everything else at the proper time. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.5.[10]

[7]CSCO 4 3:154-55. Augustine understands the brothers to be blood relatives rather than siblings, preserving Mary's perpetual virginity; see *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 28.3 (NPNF 1 7:179). [8]ANF 3:528*. [9]NPNF 1 7:180-81**. [10]LF 43:463-64**.

7:8-9 *Jesus Declined to Go to the Festival*

Not Yet Time for Feasting. Apollinaris of Laodicea: The one who blesses those who mourn because of the present age now utters similar words, saying with reference to himself something that is common to all the saints and pertains to them: It is not the time for us to feast in the middle of the present tribulations, insofar as evil still wages war and truth is rejected by the majority of people and the will of God does not hold sway on earth. For these reasons our Lord said that it was not yet his time. For the good one could not feast with the wicked, nor could he who was hated dine with those who hated him. Fragments on John 32.[11]

The Next Passover Is His Time. Chrysostom: "My time is not yet fully come." It was at the next Passover that he was to be crucified. Homilies on the Gospel of John 48.2.[12]

The Time of His Glory. Augustine: Or, "my time," that is, the time of my glory is not yet come. That will be my feast day, not a day that passes and is gone, like holidays here. Rather, it will be a feast that remains forever. At that time there will be festivity, joy without end, eternity without stain, sunshine without cloud. Tractates on the Gospel of John 28.8.[13]

[11]*JKGK* 14. See also Ammonius *Fragments on John* 242 (*JKGK* 257).
[12]NPNF 1 14:174*. [13]NPNF 1 7:181**.

A DISPUTE ABOUT THE SABBATH AT THE FEAST JOHN 7:10-23

Overview: Once we understand the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles, we are able to see how Jesus fulfills this feast when he secretly goes up to Jerusalem (Augustine). He went in secret so as not to disclose his divinity and to show us how to deal with our persecutors (Chrysostom). While some acknowledged his goodness, others thought he sought to seduce the people. But even if such a charge were true, he was seeking to draw them from evil to good—something worthy of imitation (Augustine). The ordinary people in the crowd were sound in their judgment, seeing Christ's goodness, while the rulers judge him to be a deceiver (Chrysostom). Instead of leading their people to follow the commands of God, the Jewish leaders lead them astray in opposing Christ and thus bear a great responsibility (Cyril of Alexandria). Jesus was able to gain their grudging admiration (Chrysostom), although they wondered where he received his education (Augustine) with no acknowledgment of his divine origin (Chrysostom).

Christ did not have to learn doctrine because, as God, doctrine spoke of him (Ambrose). As the Word of the Father and his Wisdom, Christ speaks both those things that are his and those that belong to the Father (Augustine). His teaching belongs to the Father because it is exactly like his and, as the Wisdom of the Father, the Father speaks through him. He shows in himself that those who do the Father's will are truly the ones who know his teaching (Cyril of Alexandria).

As its author, Jesus is not teaching anything foreign to the law but is rather transforming the law from the coarse shadow of the letter to its more profitable spiritual sense (Cyril of Alexandria). Therefore he cannot be accused of diverting attention from God to himself since his words themselves show he is in agreement with the Father. Those who seek to kill Jesus, however, are breaking the law against murder (Theodore). They, however, change the subject, accusing the one who cast out demons of having a demon (Augustine). Even though he was the creator of all that they saw, including the sabbath, they chose to condemn him because he healed on the sabbath (Augustine). In fact, those who are the strictest observers of the law would make even Moses a breaker of his own law (Theodore). The purpose of the sabbath, however, was to free us, not enslave us (Cyril of Alexandria). Those who condemn Jesus for healing on the sabbath effectively condemn themselves since they also performed healings of a sort when they circumcised on the sabbath according to God's command revealed through Moses (Justin, Irenaeus).

7:10 *Jesus Went to the Feast of Tabernacles in Secret*

How His Concealment Was Prefigured in Egypt. Augustine: Let us examine, then, what thing to come was foreshadowed in this feast day. I have explained what this Feast of Tabernacles was. It was a celebration of tabernacles because the people, after their deliverance from Egypt wandered through the wilderness on their way to the promised land dwelling in tents. As we begin to observe what this feast is, we will see how it applies to us if we are members of Christ—but we are, he having made us worthy, not we having earned it for ourselves. Let us then consider ourselves, brothers: We have been led out of Egypt, where we were slaves to the devil as to Pharaoh, where we applied ourselves to works of clay, engaged in earthly desires and worked exceedingly hard. And, while laboring, as it were, at the bricks, Christ cried aloud to us, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden."[1] From there we were led out by baptism as through the Red Sea—red because it is consecrated by the blood of Christ. All our enemies that pursued us were dead, that is, all our sins were blotted out, and we have been brought over to the other side.

At the present time, then, before we come to the land of promise, namely, the eternal kingdom, we are in the wilderness in tabernacles. Those who acknowledge these things are in tabernacles; for it

[1]See Mt 11:28.

was destined that some would acknowledge this. That person who understands that he is a stranger in this world is, as it were, in a tabernacle. That person understands that he is traveling in a foreign country when he sees himself sighing for his native land. But while the body of Christ is in tabernacles, Christ is in tabernacles. But at that time he was so secretly and not out in the open. For as yet the shadow obscured the light. When the light came, the shadow was removed. Christ was in secret: he was there in the feast of tabernacles, but hidden. At the present time, when these things are already made known, we acknowledge that we are journeying in the wilderness. If we recognize it, then we are in the wilderness.

What is it to be in the wilderness? It is to be in the desert wasteland. Why in the desert wasteland? Because it means we are in this world, where we thirst in a way in which there is no water [to satisfy]. Yet, let us thirst that we may be filled. For "blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."[2] And our thirst is quenched from the rock in the wilderness. For "the Rock was Christ," and it was struck with a rod so that the water might flow. But that it might flow, the rock was struck twice, suggesting the two beams of the cross.[3] All these things, then, that were once done in a figure are now made known to us. And it is not without meaning that it was said of the Lord, "He went up to the feast day, but not openly, but as it were in secret." For himself being in secret was what was prefigured because Christ was hid in that same festal day. For that very festal day signified Christ's members that were to sojourn in a foreign land. Tractates on the Gospel of John 28.9.[4]

The Constrained Economy of Revelation. Chrysostom: He goes up, not to suffer, but to teach. But why does he go up secretly? If he had gone up openly, he would not only have been among them, but also would have kept the violence and impetuosity [of the Jews] in check, as he had often done before. But he couldn't keep doing this all the time, because if he had gone up openly and again blinded them, he would have disclosed his divinity to a greater degree which, for the moment, he did not want to do. And so he concealed it. . . . The things that Christ did in a human way were done, in other words, not only to establish the fact of his incarnation, but also to educate us on how to be virtuous. For if he had done everything as God, how would we know what to do when things happened to us that we didn't want to have happen? Homilies on the Gospel of John 48.2, 49.1.[5]

7:12 *Either a Good Man or a Deceiver*

Christ's Treatment Is Consolation for Christians. Augustine: Whoever had any spark of grace said, "He is a good man." . . . The rest say, "No, he seduces the people." That something like this was said of him who was God is a consolation to any Christian of whom the same may be said. If to seduce is to deceive, Christ was not a seducer, nor can any Christian be. But if by seducing you mean bringing a person by persuasion out of one way of thinking into another, then we must inquire what the way of thinking is that you are calling them from and to. If from good to evil, the seducer is an evil person; if from evil to good, he is a good one. If only we were all called, and really were, that sort of seducers! Tractates on the Gospel of John 28.11.[6]

Leaders Versus the Common People. Chrysostom: The former, I think, was the opinion of the multitude, the one, that is, who pronounced him a good man. The latter is the opinion of the priests and rulers, as is shown by their saying, "He deceives the people" not "He deceives us." . . . Observe that the corruption is in the rulers. The common people are sound in their judgment but do not have freedom of speech, as is

[2]Mt 5:6. [3]See 1 Cor 10:4; Num 20:11. [4]NPNF 1 7:181-82*. [5]NPNF 1 14:174, 176**. [6]NPNF 1 7:182**.

generally the case. Homilies on the Gospel of John 49.1.[7]

7:13 *People Fear the Jewish Leaders*

Those Who Lead Others Astray. Cyril of Alexandria: If a skilled horseman—who is able to control even the swiftest team of horses with checks of the reins and directs them wherever he likes—if he were to dash the carriage wheels against a stone, the blame would not fall on the horses but on their driver. In a similar manner, I suppose, the rulers of the Jews, who are not only honored by their people but are served and feared by them as well, if they manage their people contrary to the divine commandments, then it is they who will justly bear the responsibility for the loss of all. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.5.[8]

7:14-15 *The Jews Marvel and Are Suspicious of Jesus' Teaching*

His Teaching Affects His Accusers. Chrysostom: The Evangelist does not say what his teaching is. That it was very wonderful, however, is shown by its effect even on those who had accused him of deceiving the people, those who turned round and began to admire him. And the Jews marveled, saying, "How is this man so learned when he has never been instructed?" See how perverse they are even in their admiration. It is not his doctrine they admire, but another thing altogether. Homilies on the Gospel of John 49.1.[9]

Where Did Jesus' Learning Come From? Augustine: All, it would appear, admired, but all were not converted. Where then did the admiration come from? Many knew where he was born and how he had been educated but had never seen him learning letters. Yet now they heard him disputing on the law and bringing forward its testimonies. No one could do this who had not read the law; no one could read who had not learned letters; and this raised their wonder. Tractates on the Gospel of John 29.2.[10]

No Acknowledgment of Divine Origin. Chrysostom: Their wonder might have led them to infer that our Lord became possessed of this learning in some divine way and not by any human process. But they would not acknowledge this and contented themselves with wondering. So our Lord repeated it to them when he answered them and said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." Homilies on the Gospel of John 49.1.[11]

7:16 *Jesus' Teaching Comes from God*

Jesus Teaches Like God. Ambrose: Doctrine that is of God, then, is one thing; doctrine that is human is another. So when the Jews, regarding him as man, called into question his teaching and said, "How does this man have such learning when he has never been taught?" Jesus answered and said, "My teaching is not mine." For in teaching without elegance of letters, he seems to teach not as [a] man but rather as God who, instead of learning his doctrine, originated it. For he has found and devised the entire way of discipline, as we have read above, inasmuch as of the Son of God it has been said, "This is our God; no other can be compared with him. He has uncovered the whole way of knowledge and shown it to his servant Jacob and to Israel, whom he loved. Only then did [Wisdom] appear on earth and live among human beings."[12] How, then, could he, as divine, not have his own doctrine—he who has found the entire way of discipline before he was even seen on earth? On the Christian Faith 2.9.79-80.[13]

Word of the Father Not "from Himself," Humanly Speaking. Augustine: "My doc-

[7]NPNF 1 14:176**. On the goodness of Christ in comparison, see Ambrose *On the Christian Faith* 2.2.29. [8]LF 43:473**. [9]NPNF 1 14:177*. [10]NPNF 1 7:183**. [11]NPNF 1 14:177*. [12]Bar 3:35-37.

trine," he says, "is not mine, but his that sent me." This is the first profundity. For he seems as if in a few words to have spoken contrary things. For he does not say, "This doctrine is not mine" but "My doctrine is not mine." If it is not yours, then how is it yours? If it is yours, then how is it not yours? For you say both "my doctrine" and "not mine." For if he had said this doctrine is not mine, there would have been no question. . . . The subject of inquiry, then, is that which he says: "My, not mine." This appears to be contrary. What does he mean by "my" and "not mine"? If we carefully look at what the holy Evangelist himself says in the beginning of his Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," this is where the solution of this question hangs. What then is the doctrine of the Father, but the Father's Word? Therefore, Christ himself is the doctrine of the Father, if he is the Word of the Father. But since the Word cannot be of no one but [must be] of someone, he said both "his doctrine," namely, himself, and also "not his own" because he is the Word of the Father. For what is so much "yours" as "yourself"? And what is so much not yours as yourself, if what you are is of another? . . . Therefore, to speak briefly, beloved, it seems to me that the Lord Jesus Christ said, "My doctrine is not mine," meaning the same thing as if he said, "I am not from myself." Tractates on the Gospel of John 29.3, 5.[14]

Jesus Is the Wisdom of the Father. Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus says that his teaching belongs to God the Father either because Jesus' teaching is exactly like that of God the Father or because Jesus himself is the wisdom of the Father, through which the Father speaks and orders all things. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.5.[15]

7:17 *One Who Does God's Will Knows His Teaching*

Those Who Do the Father's Will Know His Teaching. Cyril of Alexandria: He tells them, You will fully know that "my doctrine" comes from God the Father when you choose to follow his will rather than your own. . . . He justly accuses them because they unreasonably mock what he teaches, even though God the Father consents and agrees with what he is teaching, and (what is also true) even co-teaches and co-interprets [with Jesus] . . . No person of sound mind would ever think that Jesus here casts aspersions on his own words. Rather, he is saying that his words will never be anything other than in agreement with the will of God the Father. For the Father speaks by his own Word and Wisdom and offspring. But that [offspring] in no way speaks differently from the [Father]. How could it? Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.5.[16]

7:18 *Seeking One's Own Glory*

Jesus Transforms the Law. Cyril of Alexandria: The fact that Jesus does not teach anything foreign to the law is clear proof that he does not labor for his own glory through his teaching, for if he did, he would speak of himself. Rather, he is exhorting them to be obedient to the former prophecies while he removes only the unprofitable and coarse shadow of the letter and transforms it persuasively into the spiritual sense, which already lay hidden in types. Here, Christ intimates what he says in the Gospel according to Matthew, "I came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it."[17] Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.5.[18]

My Words Lead You to God. Theodore of Mopsuestia: If, he says, I wanted to avert you from God and draw you to me, it would have been evident that I was teaching you a doctrine contrary to God. But since I lead you to him through my words, it is clear and evident that these words that are said to you are just and that

[14]NPNF 1 7:183-84*. [15]LF 43:478**. Chrysostom makes the same point. See *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 49.2 (NPNF 1 14:177). [16]LF 43:479*. [17]See Mt 5:17. [18]LF 43:479-80**.

those who want to reprove them as sinful words have no reason to do so. Commentary on John 3.7.18.[19]

7:19 *The Law Given by Moses*

Jesus Accuses the Jews of Violating the Law. Theodore of Mopsuestia: If, he says, you really defend the law of Moses, prove to me that you actually preserve it, and tell me why you want to kill me: this is contrary to the law more than any other violation. Commentary on John 3.7.18.[20]

7:20 *The People's Answer*

Christ Is the Center of the Law. Augustine: The people return an answer quite distant from the subject, only showing their angry feelings. . . . He who cast out devils was told that he had a devil. . . . Our Lord, however, in no way disturbed but retaining all the serenity of truth, returned not evil for evil or railing for railing. Tractates on the Gospel of John 30.2-3.[21]

7:21 *Jesus' Response*

What If You Saw All My Works? Augustine: For all that they saw going on in the world was of his working, but they did not see him who made all things. But he did one thing—he made a man whole on the sabbath day—and they were all in commotion. They almost seem to imply that if any one of them had recovered from a disease on the sabbath, it was someone else who had made them well rather than he who had offended them by making one man whole on the sabbath. Tractates on the Gospel of John 30.3.[22]

7:22-23 *Circumcision on the Sabbath*

Circumcision on the Sabbath Also Violates the Law. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Jesus then employs a very convincing argument: Moses, he says, established circumcision and the sabbath and ordered that men were to be circumcised on the sabbath. But Moses established the sabbath out of convenience. Indeed, at that time nobody observed it. . . . He also established circumcision needlessly because it had been already established by the patriarchs. But he established this rule [about circumcision] too, in order to teach that this observance [of the sabbath] does not exist when there are cases of necessity and that sometimes it must be broken. If the sabbath can be broken for circumcision, because Moses ordered it so—and this is not considered to be a violation of the law—why then do you think the fact that a man was healed on the sabbath is a violation of the law? And, he added, making them ashamed: "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." If a transgressor of the law is one who performs something on the sabbath, the first one to be blamed should be Moses. But if Moses is not considered to be a transgressor of the law, my action is the more excellent and I am even more above reproach. Commentary on John 3.7.21-24.[23]

No Longer Slaves to the Sabbath. Cyril of Alexandria: Many sources in Scripture tell us that we should do no work on the sabbath. We are to rest as it were and quit doing all those tasks that invite sweat and labor. For he says in Exodus, "Six years you shall sow your land and gather in the fruit, but in the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie still."[24] . . . Now, it is not the land—which does not even know what work is—that he releases; nor is it to the land that he gives this law. It was given to those who possessed the land. He gave rest to the land so that they would not work on it. In this and many other ways he pointed toward our feast with Christ, a feast in which those who have lived in divine fear will hurry toward that perfect and complete liberty that is in holiness and will run to that most wealthy grace of the Spirit. This is clear in the commands them-

[19]CSCO 4 3:157. [20]CSCO 4 3:157-58. [21]NPNF 1 7:186**. [22]NPNF 1 7:186*. [23]CSCO 4 3:158. [24]Ex 23:10-11. See also Lev 25:2-4.

selves of Moses. It is written, "If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you."[25] We, who were originally slaves to sin, had, after a fashion, sold ourselves to the devil by taking pleasure in evil. But now, being justified in Christ through faith, we shall mount up to the true and holy keeping of the sabbath, clothed with the liberty that comes through grace and glorified with the good things of God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.6.[26]

Circumcision on the Sabbath Is No Sin. Justin Martyr: Tell me, did God want the priests to sin when they offer the sacrifices on the sabbath? Or did he want those to sin who are circumcised and do circumcise on the sabbaths, since he commands that on the eighth day—even though it happens to be a sabbath—those who are born shall always be circumcised? Or could not the infants be operated upon one day previous or one day subsequent to the sabbath, if he knew that it is a sinful act on the sabbaths? Or why did he not teach those who are called righteous and pleasing to him, who lived before Moses and Abraham, who were not circumcised in their foreskin and observed no sabbaths—why did he not teach them to keep these institutions? Dialogue with Trypho 27.[27]

Christ Fulfilled the Sabbath Law by Healing. Irenaeus: The Lord reproved those who unjustly blamed him for having healed on the sabbath days. For he did not make void but fulfilled the law by performing the offices of the high priest, propitiating God for people, and cleansing the lepers, healing the sick and himself suffering death, that exiled people might go forth from condemnation and might return without fear to their own inheritance. Against Heresies 4.8.2.[28]

[25]Deut 15:12. [26]LF 43:496-97**. [27]ANF 1:208*. [28]ANF 1:471.

The Source of Jesus' Teaching John 7:24-36

Overview: Jesus sets forth the principle, in what follows, that when deciding what is right, we should treat all equally, regardless of outward appearance or status (Augustine). And yet, Jesus did not receive such fair treatment from his own accusers "from Jerusalem" (Chrysostom). The crowds are amazed at his power in avoiding seizure, since they knew the efforts expended by those seeking him. The crowds thought it was the rulers' understanding of who Christ was that spared him. They say that no one would know where the Christ comes from, but Scripture asserts both knowledge and ignorance of Christ's origins. They know his family came from Nazareth, but they do not know of Bethlehem or of the virgin birth (Augustine), nor do they truly know the Father. Christ alone knows him because he alone is from God, being the true Son born from the nature of God (Hilary). This is why he knows the Father: family members know each other best (Apollinaris). Those who do not understand that Christ is begotten from the Father and not made out of anything cannot know where he is from or who sent him. Christ's words here demonstrate that his existence as God predates his advent (Hilary).

The Pharisees' fury was checked (Chrysostom) as they were prevented by divine intervention from arresting Jesus because, as he continues to reiterate, the hour of his passion had not yet come (Theodore). Jesus demonstrates that he is fully in control of his own fate, as well as ours. Despite the opposition he experienced, many of the common people believed in him because in the healing and other miracles that he performed, he did what one would expect a Messiah to do (Augustine). The Jewish leaders had no idea of how much Jesus was in control, even as his own disciples were unaware when he foretold of his resurrection and ascension (Theodore). He warns them to take advantage of his presence while they can, since he will soon be returning to his Father (Cyril of Alexandria). They, however, understand his departure as going to go the Gentiles to teach them, which he indeed does through the members of his body the church (Augustine, Chrysostom).

7:24 *Stop Judging by Appearances*

Honor and Truth Needed in Judging. Augustine: It requires a lot of work in this world to stay clear of the vice our Lord has noted in this place. It is difficult to maintain sound judgment and to stop judging by appearances. His admonition to the Jews is an admonition to us as well. . . . Let us not judge, then, by appearances, but hold to sound judgment. But who is it who does not judge according to appearances? It is the one who loves [all] equally. When there is equal love for all, then we do not accept people on the basis of who they are. We are not talking about a situation where we honor people in a different way because of their different degrees of status. This is not an instance where we should be afraid that we are accepting people on the basis [of who they are]. For instance, there may be a case to decide between father and son. We should not put the son on an equal footing with the father in point of *honor*. But, in respect of *truth*, if the son has the better cause, we should give him the preference. In this way we give each their due so that justice does not destroy merit. Tractates on the Gospel of John 30.7-8.[1]

[1]NPNF 1 7:188**. Basil, *Letters* 204.2 (NPNF 2 8:243) speaks of the impartiality needed in hearing disputes.

7:25 *The People of Jerusalem*

"From Jerusalem." Chrysostom: The Evangelist adds, "from Jerusalem," for the greatest display of miracles had been there. And there the people were in the worst state, seeing the strongest proofs of his divinity and yet willing to give up all to the judgment of their corrupt rulers. Was it not a great miracle that those who raged for his life, now that they had him in their grasp, all of a sudden became quiet? Homilies on the Gospel of John 50.1.[2]

They Marvel at His Power at Not Being Taken. Augustine: Now the power appears that was thought to be timidity: he spoke publicly at the feast, so much so that the multitude marveled. . . . They knew the fierceness with which he had been sought for. They marveled at the power by which he was not taken. Tractates on the Gospel of John 31.1.[3]

7:26 *The Jewish Authorities*

Christ Spared Because of His Power. Augustine: So, not fully understanding Christ's power, they supposed that it was owing to the knowledge of the rulers that he was spared. . . . "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" Tractates on the Gospel of John 31.1-2.[4]

7:27 *Christ's Origins Are a Mystery*

Both Knowledge and Ignorance of Christ's Origins. Augustine: This notion did not arise without foundation. We find indeed that the Scriptures said of Christ, "He shall be called a Nazarene"[5] and thus predicted where he would come from. . . . And the Jews again told Herod, when he inquired, that Christ would be born in Bethlehem of Judah and adduced the testimony of the prophet.[6] . . . How then did this notion of the Jews arise, that, when Christ came, no one would know where he came from? It arose from this reason, that is, that the Scriptures asserted both. As man, they foretold where Christ would come from. As God, he was hidden from the profane but revealed himself to the godly. . . . This notion they had taken from Isaiah, "Who shall declare his generation?" Tractates on the Gospel of John 31.2.[7]

7:28 *They Know and Yet They Do Not Know*

They Knew Jesus As Man, but Not As God. Augustine: Our Lord replies that they both knew him and knew him not, as if to say, you both know where I come from and do not know where I am from. You know where I am from, that I am Jesus of Nazareth, whose parents you know. The birth from the Virgin was the only part of the matter unknown to them: . . . with this exception, they knew all that pertained to Jesus as man. . . . So he says rightly, "You both know me and know where I am from," that is, according to the flesh and the likeness of man. But in respect of his divinity, he says, "I have not come of my own accord; he who sent me is true." Tractates on the Gospel of John 31.3.[8]

Christ Alone Knows God Because He Alone Is from God. Hilary of Poitiers: No one knows the Father; the Son often assures us of this. The reason why he says that no one knows him but himself is because he is from the Father. Is it, I ask, as the result of an act of creation or of a genuine birth that he is from him? If it is an act of creation, then all created things are from God. How then is it that none of them know the Father, when the Son says that the reason why he has this knowledge is that he is from him? If he is created, not born, we shall observe in him a resemblance to other beings who are from God. Since all, on this supposition, are from God, why is he not as ignorant of the Father as the others are? But if this knowl-

[2]NPNF 1 14:180**. [3]NPNF 1 7:189*. [4]NPNF 1 7:189*. [5]Mt 2:23. [6]Mt 2:6. [7]NPNF 1 7:189**. [8]NPNF 1 7:189-90**.

edge of the Father is peculiar to him who is from the Father, must not this circumstance also be peculiar to him, that is, that he is from the Father? That is, must he not be the true Son born from the nature of God? For the reason why he alone knows God is because he alone is from God. You observe, then, a knowledge that is peculiar to himself, resulting from a birth that also is peculiar to himself. You recognize that it is not by an act of creative power but through a true birth that he is from the Father. And you realize that this is why he alone knows the Father who is unknown to all other beings that are from him. On the Trinity 6.28.[9]

Those in the Family Know Each Other Best. Apollinaris of Laodicea: The Lord introduces two opinions about himself: (1) that they know where he comes from, since his mother is Mary; and (2) that he has something they do not know, since he is and has come from God. Therefore, he would not be a presumptuous person or a self-appointed teacher but had rather arrived at his teaching because God the Father sent him. Moreover, God who had sent him was not known to them because they kept themselves as far apart as possible from the God of true knowledge inasmuch as they revolted from his purpose and deeds. It is quite reasonable that he would know the Father, since he himself was with him. One knows one's relatives and household best. Fragments on John 36.[10]

7:29 *Jesus Knew the One Who Sent Him*

None Can Confess the Son Who Deny He Was Born. Hilary of Poitiers: Every person is born in the flesh; yet does not universal consciousness make every person spring from God? How then can Christ assert that either he or the source of his being is unknown? He can do so only by assigning his immediate parentage to the ultimate author of existence. And, when he has done this, he can demonstrate their ignorance of God by their ignorance of the fact that he is the Son of God. . . . Now he who came is not the author of his own being; but he who sent him is true whom the blasphemers do not know. He it was who sent him; and they do not know that he was the sender. Thus the sent one is from the sender; from him whom they do not know as his author. The reason why they do not know who Christ is, is that they do not know from whom he is. None can confess the Son who deny that he was born; none can understand that he was born who has formed the opinion that Jesus is from nothing. And indeed Jesus is so far from being made out of nothing that the heretics cannot tell from where he is. On the Trinity 6.29.[11]

Christ's Being from God Predates His Advent. Hilary of Poitiers: [Jesus says this] to debar heresy from the violent assumption that his being from God dates from the time of his advent. The gospel revelation of the mystery proceeds in a logical sequence. First he is born, then he is sent. Similarly, in the previous declaration, we were told of ignorance, first as to who he is and then as to from where he is. For the words "I am from him, and he sent me" contain two separate statements, as also do the words "You know me, and you know where I am from." On the Trinity 6.29.[12]

7:30 *They Tried to Arrest Jesus*

The Invisible Check on Their Fury. Chrysostom: His saying, however, "Whom you know not," irritated the Jews, who professed to have knowledge. "And they sought to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him." Mark the invisible check that is kept on their fury, though the Evangelist does not mention it but preserves purposely a humble and human way of speaking in order to impress us with Christ's humanity. Therefore, he only adds, "Because his hour was

[9]NPNF 2 9:108*. [10]*JKGK* 16. [11]NPNF 2 9:108*. See also Ambrose *On the Christian Faith* 5.10.120-22 (NPNF 2 10:299-300). [12]NPNF 2 9:108*.

not yet come." Homilies on the Gospel of John 50.2.[13]

Jesus' Arrest Is Prevented by Divine Power. Theodore of Mopsuestia: They wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him—as if they were prevented by divine power—because the time had not come yet in which his passion had to be accomplished. From this it appears that he could not be arrested by them if he did not want to be. Commentary on John 3.7.30-31.[14]

Jesus in Control of His Own Time of Death. Augustine: [They did not lay hands on him] because he did not want them to. . . . For our Lord was not born subject to fate. You must not believe this even of yourself, much less of him by whom you were made. And if your hour is in his will, is not his hour in his own will? His hour then here does not mean the time that he was obliged to die, but the time that he decided to be put to death. Tractates on the Gospel of John 31.5.[15]

7:31 *The People's Reaction to the Christ*

If Not Two Christs, This Is the One. Augustine: The Lord made whole the humble and the poor. The rulers, however, were mad and therefore not only did not acknowledge the Physician but even were eager to kill him. There was a crowd of people that quickly saw its own sickness, though, and without delay recognized his remedy. Look at what that very crowd, moved by his miracles, said: "When Christ comes, will he do more signs than these?" Unless there are two Christs, this is surely the Christ. Tractates on the Gospel of John 31.7.[16]

7:32-33 *Jesus' Return to God*

Jesus Predicts His Resurrection and Ascension. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Why, he says, are you eager to arrest me, and why do you try to do something that is not in your power? Just wait a little bit, and I will give myself over to you. Indeed, after my death, I go to my Father, and by directing myself to him, I will certainly withdraw from you. And I will be exalted over you so that, even though you look for me, you may not find me. And even though you want to, you cannot come to where I am because I will be exalted over you in glory and honor. But the Jews did not understand a single word of this. And this is not surprising, because not even the disciples, as we have already demonstrated many times, could understand the words that were said at that time. At the end they learned these things from the facts. Commentary on John 3.7.33-34.[17]

7:34 *Where Jesus Comes from Is Not Accessible*

A Stern Warning. Cyril of Alexandria: Here Jesus is saying: I was sent to give you life, and with long suffering to bring back to God those who had stumbled through sin. I came to remove death which had fallen upon human nature because of transgression. I came to instill the divine and heavenly light in those in darkness and, moreover, to preach the gospel to the poor, to give recovery of sight to the blind, to preach deliverance to the captives, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.[18] But, since it seems good to you in your senselessness to drive away the one who offers you such a rich bounty of heavenly goods, after a little while I will take myself back to him from whom I came, and you shall repent. Then, consumed by unavailing hindsight you will weep bitterly for yourselves and while you eagerly look to find the giver of life, you shall not be able to enjoy the one for whom you long. Having once turned aside and departed from my love towards you, I shall wholly deny you that which you seek. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.1.[19]

[13]NPNF 1 14:181**. [14]CSCO 4 3:160. [15]NPNF 1 7:190*. [16]NPNF 1 7:191**. [17]CSCO 4 3:160-61. [18]See Lk 4:18-19. [19]LF 43:538**.

7:35 *The People's Question*

Jesus Goes to the Gentiles. Augustine: "Will he go to the Gentiles and teach them?" They did not understand this at all. And yet even their mistake is an unwitting prophecy of our salvation. The Lord would indeed go to the Gentiles, not in his own person, but by his feet. What were his feet? Those which Saul desired to trample upon by persecution when the Head cried out to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"[20] . . . He sent to us those whom he had made his members, and so made us his members. Tractates on the Gospel of John 31.10-11.[21]

7:36 *They Did Not Understand*

No Malice Is in Their Question. Chrysostom: They did not mean that our Lord was going to the Gentiles for their harm but rather to teach them. Their anger had subsided, and they believed what he had said. Otherwise, they would not have thought of asking each other what the saying was, [i.e., "You shall seek me, and shall not find me" and "Where I am, you cannot come."] Homilies on the Gospel of John 50.3.[22]

[20]Acts 9:4. [21]NPNF 1 7:192**. [22]NPNF 1 14:182**.

THE OFFER OF LIVING WATER JOHN 7:37-44

Overview: As the feast was now coming to a close, our Lord gives the people provision for the return home (Chrysostom), for those who are thirsty may drink from the Spirit of Christ (Augustine). They no longer need a pitcher to draw the water because they have a fountain of living water welling up from inside (Didymus). The passage Jesus is quoting is difficult to find (Chrysostom), although one might look in Isaiah or the Psalms. Our Lord used the imagery of the brook in Leviticus, from which Israel took everything for its observance of the feast, to point to himself as the River who would restore Paradise and bring to us spiritual and divine delight (Cyril of Alexandria). Jesus is saying here that anyone who follows the Scriptures that speak of him will never dry up spiritually (Theodore). The living water that flows from them is the Spirit (Ire-

naeus), the river of God that flows out from the throne of God in the book of Revelation (Ambrose), giving the gift of immortality (Origen). We are called then to drink out of our own cisterns, that is, the Scriptures, which contain this living water of the Spirit. Just as water refreshes and sustains all things, so also the Spirit refreshes and sustains those who have this spring flowing from within them (Cyril of Jerusalem).

Wisdom is the fountain of life (Ambrose), which can be found in faithful preaching that flows from the soul of the faithful (Gregory the Great), so that a way of righteousness springs up in the parched desert where the elect of God reside (Irenaeus). Jesus speaks of the Spirit who had not yet been given. The Spirit, of course, was present before Christ said this, but Christ here speaks of a new dispensation of the Spirit who would be poured out at Pentecost (Augustine) and in the gift of baptism (Cyprian). However, the pouring out of the Spirit was limited until after Christ's glorification (Chrysostom), which would be fully realized when the Spirit would dwell completely in humankind (Cyril of Alexandria).

After hearing Jesus' marvelous words, the people realize he is more than just an ordinary man, but they are misguided as to who he is because they had no guidance from their leaders. They realize the Messiah would come from Bethlehem but are ignorant of Jesus' birth, knowing only that he grew up in Nazareth (Cyril of Alexandria).

7:37 *If Anyone Is Thirsty*

Provisions for the Way. Chrysostom: Since the feast was over and the people were about to return home, our Lord gives them provisions for the way. Homilies on the Gospel of John 51.1.[1]

Those Who Are Thirsty Drink from the Spirit of Christ. Augustine: Hold on to the gift but acknowledge the giver. When the Lord promised he was going to give his Spirit, he said, "If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from his belly." Where does this river in you come from? Remember your former dryness. I mean, if you had not been dry, you would not have been thirsty. If you had not been thirsty, you would not have drunk. What do I mean when I say: if you had not been thirsty, you would not have believed in Christ? Unless you had discovered how empty you were, you would not have believed in Christ. Before saying "rivers of living water will flow from his belly," he first said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come and drink." The reason you will have a river of living water is that you drink. You do not drink if you are not thirsty. Sermon 160.2.[2]

A Pitcher No Longer Needed with Christ. Didymus the Blind: Some are able to drink from the fountain without the pitcher. Rebekah, which means steadfastness in the good, stepped down to the fountain and scooped the water with the pitcher in order to give the thirsty servant [of Abraham] to drink, but she herself drank from the fountain without the pitcher. . . . The imperfect knowledge and the imperfect prophecy[3] are the pitcher filled from the fountain. When the imperfect will pass away,[4] the pitcher is broken. Its content, however, is not lost. . . . When one does not need to drink from the pitcher anymore because the Savior has given to drink and prepared in the person who drinks a spring of living water, then the pitcher is not needed for the person who has the fountain of living water[5] inside. Commentary on Ecclesiastes 361.9.[6]

7:38a *Believers and Scripture*

Where in Scripture? Chrysostom: He is here speaking of spiritual drink. . . . But where does the Scripture say that "rivers of living water

[1]NPNF 1 14:183*. [2]*WSA* 3 5:129*. [3]1 Cor 13:9. [4]1 Cor 13:10. [5]Jn 4:14. [6]PTA 9 6:235-39.

shall flow from his belly"? Nowhere.[7] What then does it mean, "He that believes on me, as the Scripture says"? Here we must place a period, so that the "rivers shall flow from his belly" may be an assertion of Christ.[8] For because many said . . . "When the Christ comes will he do more miracles?" he shows that it is important to have a correct understanding and to be convinced on the evidence of Scripture, not of miracles. In fact, many who had seen him working miracles still did not receive him as the Christ . . . "Search the Scriptures," he had said previously. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 51.1.[9]

THE TESTIMONY OF THE PSALMIST AND ISAIAH TO CHRIST THE RIVER. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: The feast of the tabernacles signified the thrice longed for time of the resurrection[10] [For its observance, God specified] the taking of boughs and mentioned the fruit of a good tree and other things besides[11] in order to indicate the recovery of Paradise that was about to be given to us again through Christ. But since [Leviticus] specifies at the end[12] that one should take everything out of the brook and rejoice again, we say that our Lord Jesus Christ was compared to a brook in whom we shall find all delight and enjoyment in hope. And in him, this brook will delight us in a divine and spiritual way. And that he is called a brook, the most wise psalmist testifies[13] . . . And the Lord himself says something similar in the prophet [Isaiah].[14] COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 5.1.[15]

THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE SCRIPTURES WILL BE FILLED. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: Clearly they referred the words, "As the Scripture has said," to the sentence following and began to ask where "shall flow streams of living water" is written. But the phrase rather should be referred to the previous sentence. Since in the holy books there are many prophecies about the Messiah, as he had already said in another passage.[16] Jesus, inciting every person to faith in him, means: Anyone who follows the Scriptures and believes in me will be filled by grace, and it will not only be like a river that never dries up but will also flow out of him, so that it may provide not only for him but for many others. And so the apostles, after they received the Spirit, provided for many others thanks to the gift they had received. COMMENTARY ON JOHN 3.7.37-39.[17]

7:38b *Streams of Living Water*

THE SPIRIT FLOWS IN ALL OF US. IRENAEUS: The Spirit is in us all, and he is the living water that the Lord supplies to those who rightly believe in him and love him. AGAINST HERESIES 5.18.2.[18]

THE RIVER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMBROSE: This . . . is not a trivial matter when we read that a river goes forth from the throne of God. For you read the words of the Evangelist John that speaks to this: "And he showed me a river of living water, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of the street and on either side was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruits, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of all nations." [19] This is certainly the river proceeding from the throne of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, whom he drinks who believes in Christ, as Christ himself says: "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes on me, as the Scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke of the Spirit." Therefore the river is the Spirit. This, then, is in the throne of God, for the water does not wash the throne of

[7]Jerome, in his prologue to the Pentateuch in his Vulgate, posited that the passage may have come from Proverbs [5:16]. See *Biblia Sacra Vulgate,* 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969, 1983), 3. [8]Not of the Scriptures. [9]NPNF 1 14:183-84**. [10]Lev 23:39 refers to the first and eighth days as days of rest. [11]See Lev 23:40. [12]Of the requirements it lists, not the end of the feast. [13]Ps 36:7-8 (35:8-9 LXX). [14]Is 66:12 (LXX). [15]LF 43:543-44*. [16]Jn 5:39. [17]CSCO 4 3:161-62. [18]ANF 1:546*. [19]Rev 22:1-2.

God. . . . And what wonder is it if the Holy Spirit is the throne of God, since the kingdom of God itself is the work of the Holy Spirit.[20] On the Holy Spirit 3.20.153-156.[21]

Superabundant Rivers for Immortality. Origen: He who believes in him has not only a well but also wells; not only springs but also rivers within him. But the springs and rivers are not those that comfort this mortal life but that bestow immortality. Homilies on Numbers 12.1.[22]

The Spirit One in Nature, Diverse in Gifts. Cyril of Jerusalem: Let us drink waters out of our own cisterns and out of our own springing wells.[23] We drink of living water springing up into everlasting life. But this is what the Savior said of the Spirit, which those who believe on him should receive. For observe what he says: "He who believes on me—not simply this, but—as the Scripture has said—here he sends you back to the Old Testament—out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." These are not rivers perceived by sense that merely water the earth with its thorns and trees. But these are rivers that bring souls to the light. And in another place he says, "But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of living water springing up into everlasting life"[24]—a new kind of water living and springing up, springing up to those who are worthy.

And why did he call the grace of the Spirit water? Because by water all things subsist; because water brings forth grass and living things; because the water of the rain showers comes down from heaven; because it comes down one in form but works in many forms. For one fountain waters the whole of paradise, and one and the same rain comes down on all the world, yet it becomes white in the lily, and red in the rose, and purple in violets and hyacinths, and different and varied in each. So it is one in the palm tree, and another in the vine, and all in all things; and yet it is one in nature, not diverse from itself. For the rain does not change itself and come down first as one thing, then as another, but adapting itself to the constitution of each thing that receives it, it becomes to each what is suitable.[25] And so the Holy Spirit also, being one, and of one nature and indivisible, distributes to each his grace, as he wills.[26] And as the dry tree, after being nourished with water, puts forth shoots, so also the soul in sin, when it has been through repentance made worthy of the Holy Spirit, brings forth clusters of righteousness. And though he is one in nature, yet many are the virtues he inculcates by the will of God and in the name of Christ. For he employs the tongue of one person for wisdom; the soul of another he enlightens by prophecy; to another he gives power to drive away devils, while another is given ability to interpret the divine Scriptures. He strengthens one person's self-control while another learns how to give to the poor. He teaches one to fast and be disciplined and another to despise the things of the body, and still another he trains for martyrdom—diverse in different people, yet not diverse from himself.[27] Catechetical Lectures 16.11-12.[28]

Wisdom As the Fountain of Spiritual Grace. Ambrose: As Wisdom is the fountain of life, it is also the fountain of spiritual grace. It is also the fountain of other virtues that guide us to the course of eternal life. Therefore, the stream that irrigates paradise rises from the soul when well-tilled, but not from the soul that lies uncultivated. The results therefore are fruit trees of diverse virtues. There are four principal trees that constitute the divisions of Wisdom. These are the well-known four principal virtues: prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice. . . . Wisdom acts as the source from which these four rivers take their rise, producing streams that are composed of these virtues. On Paradise 3.14.[29]

---

[20]See Rom 14:17; Mt 12:25, 28. [21]NPNF 2 10:156-57*. This theme is abundant in Ambrose. See also *On the Holy Spirit* 1.16.177-78; *The Prayer of Job and David* 4.2.7; *Letter* 15 (to Constantius). [22]AEG 3:263*; GCS 30:94. [23]Prov 5:15. [24]Jn 4:14. [25]See *Catechetical Lectures* 9.9-10. [26]1 Cor 12:11. [27]He then cites the whole of 1 Cor 12:7-11. [28]NPNF 2 7:117-18*. [29]FC 42:295-96*.

Faithful Preaching. Gregory the Great: When sacred preaching flows from the soul of the faithful, rivers of living water, as it were, run down from the bellies of believers. For what are the insides of the belly but the inner part of the mind; in other words, a right intention, a holy desire, humility toward God and mercy toward your fellow human beings. Homilies on Ezekiel 1.10.[30]

The Way of Righteousness Sprung Up in the Desert. Irenaeus: [Christ] plainly announced that liberty that distinguishes the new covenant and the new wine that is put into new wineskins, [that is], the faith that is in Christ, by which he has proclaimed the way of righteousness sprung up in the desert and the streams of the Holy Spirit in a dry land, to give water to the elect people of God, whom he has acquired, that they might show forth his praise. Against Heresies 4.33.14.[31]

7:39 *The Spirit Had Not Been Given Yet*

A New Dispensation of the One Spirit. Augustine: Why then did the Lord Jesus Christ determine not to give the Holy Spirit until he should be glorified? We need to first inquire in what manner the Holy Spirit was not yet in holy people, as best as we are able, before we speak further, in case this should trouble anyone. We read in the Gospel concerning the Lord himself newly born that Simeon by the Holy Spirit recognized him; that Anna the widow, a prophetess, also recognized him;[32] that John, who baptized him, recognized him;[33] that Zachariah, being filled with the Holy Spirit, said many things; that Mary herself received the Holy Spirit to conceive the Lord.[34] We have therefore many preceding evidences of the Holy Spirit before the Lord was glorified by the resurrection of his flesh. Nor was it another spirit that the prophets also had, who proclaimed beforehand the coming of Christ. Tractates on the Gospel of John 32.6.[35]

The Holy Spirit to Be Made Known in a Special Way at Pentecost. Augustine: How is this to be understood, unless the special giving or sending of the Holy Spirit after the glorification of Christ was to be such as it had never been before? For it was not that it had never occurred previously, but that it had never been known in a way such as this. For if the Holy Spirit was not given before, how were the prophets who spoke filled?[36] . . . How then was "the Spirit not given, since Jesus was not yet glorified," unless because that giving or granting or mission of the Holy Spirit was to have a certain character of its own in its very advent such as never had happened before? For we read nowhere that people spoke in tongues that they did not know through the Holy Spirit coming on them. But this is what happened then [in Acts], when it was necessary that his coming should be made plain by visible signs, in order to show that the whole world, and all nations constituted with different tongues, should believe in Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit to fulfill that which is sung in the psalm: "There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard; their sound is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world."[37] . . . The Holy Spirit, whether by the shape of a dove or by fiery tongues . . . by motion within time and by [various] forms, manifested himself co-eternal and unchangeable with the Father and the Son. On the Trinity 4.20.29-21.30.[38]

Baptism Here Indicated. Cyprian: Christ reminds of what was previously foretold by the prophet[39] and says, "If anyone thirst, let him come and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture says, rivers from his belly shall flow of living water." And that it might be the more clear that the Lord is there speaking not of the cup[40] but of baptism, Scripture has added, "But this he

[30]CCL 142:147. [31]ANF 1:511*. [32]See Lk 2:25-38. [33]See Jn 1:26-34. [34]See Lk 1:35-79. [35]NPNF 1 7:194-95*. [36]Augustine also provides numerous other examples of the Spirit having been given before Christ spoke here. [37]Ps 19:3-4 (18:4-5 LXX). [38]NPNF 1 3:85*. [39]Is 43:18-21; 48:21. [40]The Lord's Supper.

said of the Spirit that those who believed in him were to receive." But by baptism the Holy Spirit is received, and so those who are baptized and have secured the Holy Spirit go on to drink the cup of the Lord. Let no one be troubled because when divine Scripture speaks of baptism it says that we thirst and drink, since the Lord also says this in the Gospel.[41] This is because what is received with keen and thirsty desire is more fully and completely[42] drained. Letter 62.8.[43]

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Chrysostom: But in the case of the prophets, all allow that the gift was that of the Holy Spirit. But this [prophetic] grace was limited and departed and failed from off the earth from the day in which it was said, "Your house is left to you desolate."[44] Even before that day, its dearth had begun, for there was no longer any prophet among them, nor did grace visit their holy things. Since then, the Holy Spirit had been withheld. It was, instead, to be shed forth abundantly for the future. The beginning of this imparting was after the crucifixion, not only as to its abundance but also as to the increased greatness of the gifts. (For the gift was more marvelous . . . and the people of old possessed the Spirit themselves but did not impart it to others, while the apostles filled tens of thousands with it.) Since then, I say, they were to receive this Gift, but it was not yet given. For this reason he adds, "The Holy Spirit was not yet." But because then the Lord spoke of this grace, the Evangelist says, "For the Holy Spirit was not yet," that is, "was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Homilies on the Gospel of John 51.2.[45]

The Gift of the Indwelling Holy Spirit. Cyril of Alexandria: The Spirit came to be in the prophets so that they could prophesy, and now the Spirit dwells in believers through Christ, having first dwelled in Christ when he was made man. For as God, Christ has the Spirit unceasingly, since the Spirit is essentially of Christ's nature: the Spirit is his own. Christ is anointed and is said to receive the Spirit as a man, not so that he could participate in the divine good things but rather for our sake and for the sake of human nature, as we have been taught. When the Evangelist says to us, "The Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified," let us understand him to mean the full and complete indwelling of the Holy Spirit in humankind. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.[46]

7:40-41 *A People Divided: Prophet or Christ?*

A People Fully Prepared to Believe, but Misguided. Cyril of Alexandria: They were so astonished at his divine confidence, seeing that his words could no longer be gauged in human terms, that they revert to their recollection of the law as having already declared beforehand concerning the Christ and saying that a prophet would be raised up similar to the all-wise Moses who should interpret to Israel the words from God.[47] . . . From the quality therefore of his words and the superiority of his sayings they say that he is already shown to be the one who was heralded in the law. . . . They thought that the Christ would be someone other than the prophet of the law. . . . Whereas two were supposed to come, I mean, the prophet of the law, that is, Christ, and Elijah—they were looking for three, imagining that the prophet was other than Jesus. . . . But we must observe that they were already fully prepared to believe. They are persuaded by the Savior's words to marvel at him. And yet, without guidance from their rulers, they are borne along a many-branching path of ideas. Some call him and now believe him to be the Christ, others that he is the prophet. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.[48]

---

[41]See Mt 5:6. [42]Lat *uberius*. [43]NF 5:360**. See also Basil *On the Holy Spirit* 15.34-36 (*OHS* 57-60). [44]Mt 23:38. [45]NPNF 1 14:184*. Theodore says "Holy Spirit" here does not mean the person but his works and grace (CSCO 4 3:162). [46]LF 43:551-52**. [47]Deut 18:18. [48]LF 43:552-53**.

7:42-44 *Christ Is from Bethlehem, Not Galilee*

A Careful, but Not Complete, Inquiry. Cyril of Alexandria: The Jews are not haphazard in the inquiries about Christ. They can be found going through each and every idea in order to arrive at a perception of the truth. For having first marveled at his words, they next turn to the divine Scripture thinking to find there a most unerring conception of him, for such is its nature. They believe that he shall be of the seed of the thrice-blessed David and shall be revealed in Bethlehem of Judea, persuaded by the prophecies concerning this.[49] . . . But the unassisted mind of the Jews was led astray and failed to find Christ merely on account of Nazareth, which was situated in Galilee. It was common knowledge that our Lord was brought up here.[50]. . . But they did not know that he had been born in Bethlehem of Judea of the Holy Virgin, who was of the seed of David (for she was of the tribe of Judah by descent). Merely knowing that our Lord was brought up at Nazareth, they fall away from the truth and lack sound reasoning. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.[51]

[49]Mic 5:2. [50]See Lk 4:16. [51]LF 43:553-54**.

UNBELIEF OF JEWISH LEADERS IN SPITE OF TEACHING JOHN 7:45-52

Overview: The officers who were sent by the Pharisees believed in Jesus. They remained innocent of any crime against him and were full of admiration for him (Augustine). What the Pharisees expected to happen to the people, in other words, happens instead to those whom they sent (Cyril of Alexandria). Those who were sent recognize that only the living God could have spoken as Jesus did about living water (Athanasius). Those who did not know the law believe, while those who supposedly knew the law do not believe (Augustine). Those sent by the Pharisees ask if any of the rulers or Pharisees have believed. Despite the Pharisees' answer in the negative, there is one Pharisee, Nicodemus, who believed (Chrysostom). He did not approve of what they were doing (Theodore). Nicodemus hopes that these Pharisees might become like those they sent, which was possible if they only would listen to what Jesus has to say (Augustine). But when they become hostile toward him, Nicodemus's faith is still not strong enough to

deal with their opposition (Cyril, Theodore).

7:45 *Why Did You Not Bring Him?*

The Officers Return Full of Admiration. Augustine: But those who had been sent to take him returned innocent of the crime and full of admiration. For they even gave witness to his divine doctrine, when those by whom they had been sent asked, "Why have you not brought him?" They answered that they had never heard a man speak like this. . . . But he spoke in this way because he was God and man. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.1.[1]

7:46 *No Man Ever Spoke Like This Man!*

The Power of Jesus' Speech. Cyril of Alexandria: The chief priests and Pharisees, fearing that the people of the Jews might be persuaded by the Savior's words, send out officers to arrest him. They think that if Christ were out of the way they might no longer be concerned with him. But what they suspected might happen to the people actually happens to those whom they sent to arrest Jesus. Moreover, the chief priests and Pharisees shudder to hear a report from their own officers that contradicts them: "No man ever spoke like this man!" . . . In essence the officers are saying, "It is unreasonable for you to blame us for not being able to arrest Jesus, for how could one arrest a man who by his words possesses divine nature? For he spoke not as a man, nor were his words befitting man, but they unmistakably belong to one who is God by nature." Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.[2]

Only the Living God Could Have Spoken Like This. Athanasius: They perceived that this was not a mere man like themselves, but that this was he who gave water to the saints and that it was he who was announced by the prophet Isaiah. For he was truly the splendor of the light,[3] and the Word of God, the river that flowed from the fountains and watered the paradise of old. But now, to all he gives the same gift of the Spirit and says, "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes on me, as the Scripture says, rivers of living water shall flow out of his belly."[4] This was not for [a] man to say but for the living God, who truly promises life and gives the Holy Spirit. Festal Letter 44.[5]

7:47-49 *Only the People Believed in Jesus*

Those Who Did Not Know the Law Believe. Augustine: Those who did not know the law believed on the one who had sent the law, and those men who were teaching the law despised him.[6] . . . For the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, were made blind, and the people who did not know the law and yet believed on the author of the law were enlightened. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.1.[7]

7:50-52 *Nicodemus Asks for a Hearing*

At Least One Pharisee Believed. Chrysostom: He shows that they neither know the law nor do the law, for if the law commands to kill no one without first hearing him, and they before hearing were eager to do this, they were transgressors of the law. And because they said, "None of the rulers has believed on him," therefore the Evangelist informs us that Nicodemus was "one of them," to show that even rulers believed on him. For although they were not all that bold yet, still they were becoming attached to Christ. Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.1.[8]

Nicodemus Opposes the Other Pharisees. Theodore of Mopsuestia: It is evident that not all the doctors approved what they were doing, since one of the doctors was Nicodemus, who replied against their words. Commentary on John 3.7.50-51.[9]

[1]NPNF 1 7:197**. [2]LF 43:555-56**. [3]Heb 1:3. [4]Jn 7:37-38. [5]NPNF 2 4:553*; NPB 6 1:160. [6]See Jn 9:39. [7]NPNF 1 7:197*. [8]NPNF 1 14:187*. [9]CSCO 4 3:163-64.

Nicodemus Hopes They Will Believe. Augustine: Nicodemus indeed knew, or rather believed, that if only they were willing to give him a patient hearing, they would perhaps become like those who were sent to take him but preferred to believe. They answered, from the prejudice of their heart, what they had answered to those officers, "Are you also a Galilean?" that is, one seduced as it were by the Galilean. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.2.[10]

The Weak Faith of Nicodemus. Cyril of Alexandria: Nicodemus, who was numbered among those having authority . . . is himself indignant with the Pharisees for condemning the people for only marveling at Jesus. It is clear that he agrees with those who believe. However, he is still sick from harmful shame and, not yet mingling boldness with his zeal, he does not permit his faith to be clearly revealed. Rather, he hides his faith as with a dark cloak and conceals that he is on Christ's side. Nicodemus is sick with a terrible sickness because we ought to believe fearlessly, glorying rather than being ashamed, practicing a transparent openness and rejecting slave-like hypocrisy. . . . Thus it was fitting for the wise Paul to declare, "I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith."[11] Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.[12]

Nicodemus's Weakness or Fear Keeps Him Silent. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Nicodemus, either out of weakness or fear of the doctors, did not reply to them when they wanted to diminish the words and works of Christ by mentioning Galilee. Commentary on John 3.7.52.[13]

[10]NPNF 1 7:197*. [11]Rom 1:16. [12]LF 43:559-60**. [13]CSCO 4 3:164.

THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY[1]
JOHN 7:53—8:11

Overview: The account of the woman caught in adultery is included in many of the Greek as well as Latin copies (Jerome), although it is not included in most early manuscripts we have. One reason for the paucity of textual evidence may be that those of a weaker faith removed the text, thinking it might encourage adultery (Augustine).

It is fitting that the anointed Christ goes to the Mount of Olives, since it is olive oil that is used for anointing (Augustine). Further, the Mount suggests the height of our Lord's benevolence and mercy, which also descends to the temple, where his faithful are present (Bede). On encountering the Jewish leaders seeking to stone a woman caught in adultery, Jesus is confronted with the dilemma of whether or not she should be forgiven, thus putting his adherence to the law to the test (Augustine, Bede). In his reply, Jesus maintains both justice and meekness (Augustine). Without uttering a word, Jesus' actions condemn her accusers (Augustine, Jerome) as he writes on the dusty ground, which bears more fruit than her accusers' hearts of stone (Augustine). They are condemned by the very law by which they accuse—a law written by the same finger of God that now writes in the dust before their eyes (Bede, Augustine).

Jesus invites them to throw the first stone, an offer they ultimately can and must refuse. When confronted with the voice of justice (Augustine), which calls for justice to begin with oneself (Gregory, Bede), they are struck down without Jesus even looking at them (Augustine). They leave one by one, with perhaps the guiltiest leaving first. If only everyone would acknowledge his guilt as these men did! Jesus also makes clear, however, that there is no double standard between men and women when it comes to adultery. By the time he is finished writing on the ground, all that is left is the pitiable and the one who pitied her (Augustine). And so, just as Jesus was merciful, bishops and pastors should be merciful when dealing with sin (*Didascalia*). The woman's answer to Jesus' final question, "Who is left to condemn you" is in effect an admission of guilt that receives Jesus' mercy, not his condemnation (Augustine).

Many Greek and Latin Copies Contain the Account. Jerome: In the Gospel, according to John, there is found in many of both the Greek as well as the Latin copies, the story of the adulteress who was accused before the Lord. Against the Pelagians 2.17.[2]

The Text Removed by Some So as Not to Encourage Adultery. Augustine: Some men of slight faith, or, rather, some hostile to true faith, fearing, as I believe, that liberty to sin with impunity is granted their wives, remove from their scriptural texts the account of our Lord's pardon of the adulteress, as though he who said, "From now on, sin no more," granted permission to sin, or as though the woman should not have been cured by the divine physician by the remission of that sin in order not to offend others who are equally unclean. On Adulterous Marriages 2.7.6.[3]

8:1 *Jesus Went to the Mount of Olives*

Mount of Olives, Oil, Anointing and Christ. Augustine: And where ought Christ to teach, except on the Mount of Olives; on the mount of ointment, on the mount of chrism. For the name Christ is from *chrism,* chrism being the Greek word for unction.[4] He has anointed us for our fight with the devil. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.3.[5]

The Height of the Lord's Mercy. Bede: The Mount of Olives designates the height of the

[2]FC 53:321. The account is lacking in Origen, Chrysostom, Cyril and Theodore's commentaries. Augustine and Bede seem to be the primary patristic witness to the text, although it is also included in the *Didascalia,* Gregory the Great, a brief reference in Cassiodorus's comment on Ps 56 (see ACW 52:42), Ambrosiaster *Question* 102.1 (CSEL 50:199) and Didymus (see NTS 34:25). [3]FC 27:107-8*. [4]Lat *unctio.* [5]NPNF 1 7:197*.

Lord's benevolence and mercy, for in Greek "mercy" is called *oleos,* and an olive plantation is called *oleon,*[6] and also because anointing with oil usually soothes weary and aching limbs. But oil is preeminent in power and purity too, and it tends to make its way up and float on the top of any liquid that you choose to pour into it. This fact not inappropriately suggests the grace of heavenly mercy. . . .

Let us come then with all our concentration of mind to him who has his place on the invisible Mount of Olives. God, his God, has anointed him with the oil of gladness above his companions[7] in order that he may deign to make us also companions of that anointing of his, that is, sharers of spiritual grace. Homilies on the Gospels 1.25.[8]

8:2 *Teaching at the Temple*

Mercy Comes to the Temple. Bede: Jesus made his way to the Mount of Olives to announce that the peak of mercy consists in himself. He came again at daybreak to the temple to signify that, as the radiance of the New Testament was beginning, that same mercy was to be disclosed and presented to the temple, namely, to his faithful ones. . . .

The Lord's sitting suggests the humility of his incarnation through which he deigned to show mercy to us. . . . It is good that we are told that when Jesus taught sitting down, all the people came to him. After he became a neighbor to human beings by the humility of his incarnation, his words were more readily received by many. Homilies on the Gospels 1.25.[9]

8:3-4 *Scribes and Pharisees Bring a Woman Caught in Adultery*

The Tongue Is Deceitful. Augustine: The Jews, it says, brought a woman, possibly a prostitute, to the Lord, to test him, and they said, "Master, this woman has just now been caught in adultery. In the law of Moses it is written that any woman caught in adultery should be stoned. What do you say?" That is what the tongue said, but it did not acknowledge the Creator. These people had no inclination to pray and say, "Snatch my soul from a deceitful tongue."[10] It was deceitfully, after all, that they had approached him.

This, you see, is what they were intending to do. The Lord had come not to destroy the law but to fulfill it and to forgive sins. So the Jews said to themselves, "If he says 'Let her be stoned,' we shall say to him, 'What has become of your forgiving sins? Aren't you the one who says "Your sins are forgiven you?"[11] But if he says, 'Let her go,' we shall say, 'What has become of your coming to fulfill the law and not to destroy it?'" Notice how deceitful toward God the tongue is. Sermon 16a.4.[12]

Another Test for Jesus. Bede: If he determined that she was to be stoned, they would scoff at him inasmuch as he had forgotten the mercy that he was always teaching. If he prohibited the stoning, they would gnash their teeth at him, and, as they saw it, rightly condemn him as a doer[13] of wicked deeds contrary to the law. But it was beyond the ability of earthly stupidity to find out what he would say and from heavenly wisdom to fail [to know] what he would answer. Far be it from blind wickedness to stand in the way of the "Sun of justice"[14] to keep him from giving light to the world. Homilies on the Gospels 1.25.[15]

8:5-6 *The Law of Moses and the Writing on the Ground*

Justice and Meekness Both Maintained. Augustine: Why would they accuse him? Had they caught him committing a crime, or was that

[6]Some manuscripts spell *eleos* and *eleon*. [7]Ps 45:7 (44:8 LXX). [8]CS 110:245-46, 251-52. [9]CS 110:246. [10]Ps 120:2 (119:2 LXX, Vg). [11]Mk 2:5. [12]*WSA* 3 1:349-50. [13]"Doer" = *factorem;* var.: "promoter" = *fautorem*. [14]Mal 4:2. [15]CS 110:246-47.

woman involved with him in some inappropriate way? What then does it mean that they tested him in order to accuse him? There was a wonderful gentleness that shone out preeminently in Jesus. They had already remarked about Jesus being overly lenient. Indeed it had been prophesied about him . . . "Ride on and reign because of the word of truth, of meekness and of righteousness."[16] So as a teacher he brought truth, as a deliverer he brought gentleness, as an advocate he brought righteousness. Each of these would be part of his reign, as the prophet had foretold by the Holy Spirit. When he spoke, his truth was acknowledged. When he acted against his enemies, he used no violence. His meekness was praised. So they laid a stumbling block for him when it came to the third issue, of justice. For the law had commanded the adulterers to be stoned, and surely the law could not command what was unjust. If anyone said anything other than what the law commanded, he would be detected as an unjust person. Therefore they said among themselves . . . "If he decides to let her go, he will not be just. But," they say, "in order to maintain his meekness, which has made him already so acceptable to the people, Jesus must decide to let her go." They were hoping to find an occasion to accuse him as a transgressor of the law so that he too would be stoned with the woman. . . . But our Lord in his answer both maintained his justice without leaving out gentleness. They laid the snare for him, but they were the ones who were caught in it because they did not believe in the one who could pull them out of the net. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.4.[17]

Jesus' Actions Condemn the Accusers. Augustine: He who had come as a redeemer, not as a hanging judge—he who had come to redeem what was lost—turned away from them as though unwilling to look at them. This turning away from them is not empty of meaning. Something is to be understood by this turning away. It is as though he were saying, "You bring me this sinner, you who are sinners yourselves. If you think I ought to condemn sins, I shall begin with you." Sermon 16a.4.[18]

Jesus Inscribes the Sins of the Woman's Accusers. Jerome: The Scribes and Pharisees kept accusing her and kept earnestly pressing the case, for they wished to stone her to death, according to the law. "But Jesus, stooping down, began to write with his finger on the ground," the sins, to be sure, of those who were making the accusation, as well as the sins of all mortal beings according to what is written in the prophet, "Those who depart from you shall be written in the earth."[19] Against the Pelagians 2.17.[20]

Ground Bears Fruit, Hearts of Stone Do Not. Augustine: He wrote with his finger on the ground, as if indicating that the names of people like these men were to be written in earth, not in heaven, which is where he told his disciples they should rejoice that their names were written. Or perhaps he meant to convey the idea of humility when he bowed his head [to write on the ground] . . . ; or he wrote on the ground to signify that the time had now arrived when his law should be written on soil that would bear fruit and not on sterile stone, as before. Harmony of the Gospels 4.10.17.[21]

The Same Finger That Wrote the Ten Commandments. Bede: When the Lord was about to give pardon to the sinful woman, he desired to write with his finger on the ground, in order to point out that it was he himself who once wrote the Ten Commandments of the law on stone with his finger, that is, by the action of the Holy Spirit. And it is good that the law was written upon stone, since it was given to subdue the inmost hearts of a hard-

[16]See Ps 45:3-4 (44:4-5 LXX, Vg). [17]NPNF 1 7:197-98**. [18]*WSA* 3 1:350. [19]Jer 17:13 LXX. [20]FC 53:321-22*. [21]NPNF 1 6:233**.

hearted and defiant people. Homilies on the Gospels 1.25.[22]

The Finger of God Is the Holy Spirit. Augustine: What was signified by this indulgence? Grace. What was signified by that hardness? The law given on stones. This is why the Lord was writing with his finger, but now on the ground from which he could obtain crops. But anything sown on stone does not come up, because it cannot put down roots. The finger of God wrote both then and now. It was by the finger of God that the law was written, and the finger of God [now] is the Holy Spirit. Sermon 272b.5.[23]

8:7 *Casting the First Stone*

An Answer They Cannot Refuse. Augustine: And then he who had come to forgive sins said, "Whichever of you knows himself to be without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." What a splendid answer or rather suggestion! If they had been prepared to throw a single stone at the sinner, they would have received the prompt rejoinder, "The judgment you judge with shall be pronounced on you."[24] You have condemned; condemned you shall be.

They, however, even if they would not acknowledge their Creator, knew their own consciences. Turning one after the other, they too in their confusion unwilling to look each other in the face, from the eldest to the youngest—that is what the Evangelist said—all went out. The Holy Spirit, you see, had said, "They have all turned aside, all alike have become unprofitable; there is not one who does good, no not even one."[25] Sermon 16a.4.[26]

The Voice of Justice. Augustine: What answer, then, did the Lord Jesus make? How did the truth answer? How did Wisdom answer? How did that Righteousness, against whom a false accusation was ready, answer? He did not say, "Do not stone her"; otherwise he would seem to speak contrary to the law. But God forbid that he should say, "Stone her," for he came not to lose what he found, but to seek what was lost. What then did he answer? See how full of righteousness, how full of meekness and truth his answer is? "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." . . . This is the voice of justice. Let the sinner be punished, but not by sinners. Let the law be carried out, but not by transgressors of the law. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.5.[27]

Judge Yourself First. Gregory the Great: For whoever does not judge himself first cannot know how to judge correctly in the case of another. For even though he knows what the offense is because he was told what it is, he cannot judge what another deserves when, supposing himself innocent, he will not apply the rule of justice to himself. Morals on the Book of Job 14.29.34.[28]

8:8 *Bending Down, Again Jesus Writes*

A Humble Examination. Bede: In line with our usual human way of doing things, we can understand that the reason why the Lord might wish to bend before his unprincipled tempters and to write on the ground was that by directing his look elsewhere he might give them the freedom to go away. He foresaw that as they had been astounded by his answer, they would be more inclined to depart quickly than to ask him more questions. . . .

Figuratively speaking, the fact that both before and after he gave his opinion he bent and wrote on the ground admonishes us that both before we rebuke a sinning neighbor and after we have rendered to him the ministry of due correction, we should subject ourselves to a suitably humble examination, lest perhaps we be entangled in the same things that we censure in

[22] CS 110:249. [23] *WSA* 3 7:307. [24] Mt 7:2. [25] Ps 14:3 (13:3 LXX, Vg). [26] *WSA* 3 1:350. [27] NPNF 1 7:198**. [28] LF 21:138**.

[our neighbors] or in any other sort of misdeeds. For it often comes about, for example, that people who publicly judge a murderer to be a sinner may not perceive the worse evil of the hatred with which they themselves despoil someone in secret. People who bring an accusation against a fornicator may ignore the plague of the pride with which they congratulate themselves for their own chastity. People who condemn a drunkard may not see the venom of envy with which they themselves are eaten away. In dangers of this sort, what saving remedy is left for us except that, when we look at some other sinner, we immediately bend down—that is, we humbly observe how we would be cast down by our frail condition if divine benevolence did not keep us from falling? Let us write with a finger on the ground—that is, let us meticulously ponder with discrimination whether we can say with blessed Job, "For our heart does not censure us in all our life,"[29] and let us painstakingly remember that if our heart censures us, God is greater than our heart and he knows all things. Homilies on the Gospels 1.25.[30]

He Does Not Even Look at Them. Augustine: Having pierced them through with the dart of justice, he chose not even to look on the fallen but averted his eyes. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.5.[31]

8:9 *They Left One by One*

Struck Down with the Voice of Justice. Augustine: Struck down with the voice of justice as if by a dart, they examine themselves, find themselves guilty and one by one withdraw. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.5.[32]

The More Guilty Leave First. Anonymous: The more guilty of them, perhaps, or those who were more conscious of their faults leaving first. Gloss on John 8.9.[33]

If Only Everyone Would Acknowledge Guilt as They Did. Augustine: The ones whom that act of the Lord displeases are themselves shameless. It is not chastity that makes them stern. They belong, rather, to those men of whom the Lord says, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her." But the men [of the text], terrified by their consciences, departed. And they stopped putting Christ on trial and vilifying the adultress. These men,[34] on the contrary, sick as they are, censure the physician and although they themselves are adulterers, they rage at the adulteress. On Adulterous Marriages 2.7.6.[35]

No Double Standard Between Women and Men. Augustine: When we speak to these men in this way, they not only are not willing to detract at all from their severity but also become enraged at the truth. They say in answer: We are men; will the dignity of our sex sustain this affront, so that we become like women in paying the penalty for our sins if we have relations with women other than our own wives? As if for this very reason, that they are men, they ought not all the more to bridle their sinful desires, as becomes men. . . . And yet, they become indignant if they should hear that men, guilty of adultery, pay the same penalty as adulterous women, although they should be punished as much more severely as it befits them to surpass the virtue of their wives and to govern them by their examples. . . . There are some who are not pleased at the fact that, in the matter of chastity, there is a single norm for both husband and wife. In this matter, particularly, they would rather be subject to the standard of the world than the law of Christ, because civil law does not seem to restrict men with the same bonds of chastity as it does women. On Adulterous Marriages 2.8.7.[36]

[29]Job 27:6. [30]CS 110:248-49*. [31]NPNF 1 7:198-99*. [32]NPNF 1 7:198*. [33]ACA 6:283. [34]Against whom Augustine is writing. [35]FC 27:108*. [36]FC 27:108-9*.

The Pitiful and Pity. Augustine: The two were left alone, the pitiful and Pity. . . . They left the woman with her great sin in the keeping of him who was without sin. And because she had heard, "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone at her," she most likely expected to be punished by one in whom no sin could be found. But he who had repelled her adversaries with the voice of justice lifted on her the eyes of mercy. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.5-6.[37]

8:10 *Where Are Those Who Condemn You?*

Bishops Are to Be As Merciful As Jesus Was. *Didascalia*: If you [the bishop] are not merciful to the penitent, you sin against the Lord God because you have not been persuaded, nor have you believed our Savior and God by doing what he did for that sinful woman whom the elders set before him and went away, leaving him to pass sentence. But he who searches the hearts asked her, "'Have the elders condemned you, my daughter?' She answered him, 'No, Lord.' Then he said to her, 'Go your way. I also do not condemn you.'" This is where our Savior, King and God must be a pattern for you bishops. *Didascalia* 7.[38]

Her Answer Confesses Her Sin. Augustine: He was granting pardon, but while he was granting it he raised his face to her and said, "Has no one stoned you?" And she did not say, "Why? What have I done, Lord? I'm not guilty, am I? That is not what she said. What she said was, "No one, Lord." She accused herself. They had been unable to prove it against her and had withdrawn. But she confessed, because her Lord was not unaware of her guilt but was nonetheless seeking her faith and her confession. "Has no one stoned you?" "No one, Lord." "No one"—that is confession of sins. "Lord"—that is pardon of what she deserved. "No one, Lord. I acknowledge both things. I know who you are; I know who I am. It is to you I am confessing. You see, I have heard the words, 'Confess to the Lord, for he is good.'[39] I know my confession, I know your mercy." Sermon 16a.5.[40]

8:11 *Go and Sin No More*

God Is Both Merciful and Just. Augustine: "Neither will I condemn you." What is this, O Lord? Do you therefore favor sins? Not so, evidently. Mark what follows: "Go and sin no more." Therefore the Lord did also condemn, but condemned sins, not the sinner. For if he was a patron of sin, he would say, Neither will I condemn you; go, live as you will; be secure in my deliverance, however much you will to sin. I will deliver you from all punishment even of hell, and from the tormentors of the infernal world. He did not say this. Let them pay attention, then, who love his gentleness in the Lord, and let them fear his truth. For "the Lord is sweet and right."[41] You love him because he is sweet; fear him because he is right. As the meek one he said, "I held my peace," but as the just one he said, "Shall I always be silent?"[42] "The Lord is merciful and pitiful." He certainly is. He is also "long suffering" "and very full of pity." But most fearful is what comes last, "He is true."[43] For those whom he now bears with as sinners, he will judge as despisers: "Or do you despise the riches of his long suffering and gentleness; not knowing that the forbearance of God leads you to repentance? But you, after your hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up for yourself wrath against the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God who will render to every man according to his deeds."[44] The Lord is gentle, the Lord is long suffering, the Lord is full of pity; but the Lord is also just, the Lord is also true.[45] He bestows on you an interval for correction, but you love the delay of judgment more than the amendment of your ways. Were you a bad person yesterday? Today be a good per-

[37]NPNF 1 7:198-99**. [38]*DA* 76**. See also the Apostolic Constitutions 2.4.24 (ANF 7:408). [39]Ps 106:1 (105:1 LXX, Vg). [40]*WSA* 3 1:350-51. [41]Ps 25:8 (24:8 LXX, Vg). [42]Is 42:14. [43]Ps 86:15 (85:15 LXX, Vg). [44]Rom 2:4-6. [45]See also Bede on this point, *Homilies on the Gospels* 1.25 (CS 110:250).

son. Have you gone on in your wickedness today? At any rate, change tomorrow. You always expect and make exceedingly great promises to yourself, [presuming on] the mercy of God. It is as if he, who has promised you pardon through repentance, promised you also a longer life. How do you know what tomorrow may bring? Rightly you say in your heart: When I shall have corrected my ways, God will put all my sins away. . . . God has promised pardon to anyone who amends his life. But show me where God has promised you a long life. Tractates on the Gospel of John 33.6-7.[46]

[46]NPNF 1 7:199*.

THE WITNESS OF THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD JOHN 8:12-20

Overview: Jesus is the light not only of Galilee, Palestine or Judea but of the whole world (Chrysostom). He is God of God and Light of Light, but he tempered his light under the cloud of flesh so that it could be seen by the world (Augustine). His illumination leads us to immortality (Irenaeus) through the waters of baptism (Gregory of Nazianzus). He is the light that reveals (Maximus the Confessor) the splendor of the eternal Light, which Isaiah prophesied would appear in Galilee (Theodore). As such, he is not only in the light (Ammonius) but is light by nature (Cyril of Alexandria). Unlike the light of the sun, this light will never desert us. When we follow it with the eyes of faith, we will ultimately behold that future vision when there will be no more night (Augustine), just as Israel did not stray when it followed the light of the pillar of fire in the wilderness (Cyril of Alexandria). Our Lord gives tacit praise to Nicodemus as one who does follow the light, in contrast to the darkness of his pharisaic colleagues (Chrysostom).

The Pharisees falsely accuse Jesus who, as the light that illumines all, by definition cannot lie

(Cyril of Alexandria). As God Jesus is a competent witness to himself (Chrysostom), and as light he makes himself known. He tells them that he knows where he comes from, that is, from the Father, but they do not because, even though the light shines on them, they do not have eyes to see. They see the man but do not see he is God (Augustine), and therefore they judge badly, according to the flesh (Chrysostom). In spite of their challenge, Jesus defers his judgment, however (Augustine). When Jesus does come to judge the world, he will judge in the company of his Father, and therefore his judgment will be beyond dispute (Augustine, Tertullian) because he proceeds from his Father, which in no way implies a lesser role for the Son (Cyril of Alexandria).

Jesus references the law in connection with his judgment, demonstrating his respect for the law's requirement regarding two or three witnesses (Theodore). These witnesses are indeed present in the Trinity, which validates his testimony (Augustine). Jesus' work also testifies to his equality with the Father (Chrysostom). The Son is the doorway to the Father, which is why Jesus says if you know the Son, you know the Father (Cyril of Alexandria). In essence, he is saying in this statement that he and the Father are one (Augustine). The heterodox use this text to try and prove that the God whom the Jews worship was not the Father of Christ, implying that neither the ancient Jews nor the Pharisees knew the Father because the Father was different from the Creator they worshiped. But the real reason the Pharisees did not know the Father (who is also Creator) is because they did not live according to the Creator's will. They may have known God in a cursory way but had no knowledge of the Father or of his Son. John notes that Jesus chose to speak these words in the temple treasury, perhaps indicating it was Jesus' gift to the treasury as he opened up its spiritual treasures (Origen). Jesus obviously was not under any necessity of fate when he spoke of freely giving his life (Augustine).

8:12a *I Am the Light of the World*

The Light of the Whole World. Chrysostom: Since they were continually bringing up Galilee and "the prophet" (as if that was all he claimed to be), he wanted to show that he was not one of the prophets but the Master of the world. "I am the Light of the world," not only of Galilee, or of Palestine, or of Judea. Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.2.[1]

The Light That Made the Sun. Augustine: The Manichaeans suppose the sun visible to our natural eyes to be our Lord Christ, . . . but the right faith of the universal church condemns such fiction. . . . He is God of God, Light of Light. The sun's light was made by this Light.[2] And the Light that made the sun, under which he also made us, was himself made under the sun for our sake. That Light that made the sun was made, I say, [to come humbly] under the sun for our sake. . . . He hid himself under the cloud of the flesh, not to obscure but to temper his light. Speaking then through the cloud of the flesh, the Light unfailing, the Light of wisdom says to humanity, "I am the Light of the world." Tractates on the Gospel of John 34.2, 4-5.[3]

The Fatherly Light of Christ Leads Us to Immortality. Irenaeus: No one was able, either in heaven or in earth or under the earth, to open the book of the Father . . . so that all things . . . might behold their King and that the Fatherly light might meet with and rest upon the flesh of our Lord and come to us from his radiant flesh. In this way, human beings might attain to immortality, having been invested with the Fatherly light. Against Heresies 4.20.2.[4]

The Children of Perfect Light. Gregory of Nazianzus: Listen to the voice of God, which sounds so exceedingly clear to me—I who

[1]NPNF 1 14:187**. [2]Gen 1:3. See also Tertullian *Against Praxeas* 12 (*TTAP* 145). [3]NPNF 1 7:200-201**. [4]ANF 1:488**.

am both disciple and master of these mysteries. This is how I hope to God it may sound to you: "I am the Light of the world." Therefore approach him and be enlightened,[5] and do not let your faces be ashamed,[6] being signed with the true Light. It is a season of new birth; let us be born again. It is a time of reformation; let us receive again the first Adam. [7] Let us not remain what we are, but let us become what we once were. The Light shines in darkness[8] in this life and in the flesh. It is chased by the darkness but is not overtaken by it. I am referring to the power of the enemy that leaps up in its shamelessness against the visible Adam. But it encounters God and is defeated. Let us put away the darkness so that we may draw near to the Light and may then become perfect Light, the children of perfect Light. On the Holy Lights, Oration 39.2.[9]

The Brightness of Souls. Maximus the Confessor: [Christ] is the brightness of souls, the one who drives away the darkness of ignorance, and the one who reveals mysteries that can be perceived only by the pure. Chapters on Knowledge 2.70.[10]

Splendor of the Eternal Light. Anonymous:

O Dayspring,
Splendor of the Eternal Light, and Sun of Justice.
Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

O Oriens Antiphon of Advent.[11]

The Prophecy of Isaiah. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Do you not recognize the words of the prophet,[12] in the fact that the Galileans enjoy a great light? Therefore, [Jesus says], "I am that light." And I not only provide [this light] for them but for all people. Whoever keeps close to me will not suffer; I have sufficient [light] for all people. Commentary on John 3.8.12.[13]

Jesus, the Light, Is One. Ammonius: He called himself "the light," not because "the light is in me"—lest someone split the one Christ into a duality of Sons. Christ, the Son, is one, both before the flesh and after the flesh. He is in truth the one and only Son of God the Father even when he became man since he did not partially embrace the human nature. For his body is his own, and it is blasphemy to divide Christ after his incarnation into two sons or into two beings.[14] Fragments on John 266.[15]

The Only Begotten Is Light by Nature. Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus reveals the ignorance of the scribes and Pharisees when he cries out, "I am the light of the world." He is saying, "You who go through the whole of holy Scripture and think that you will assess what is spoken about me through the prophets have strayed far from the way of life. And it is no wonder, for he who reveals mysteries and illumines the whole world, he who shines like a sun into the hearts of those who would receive him—he is not in you. He who does not have the divine and spiritual light within himself must surely walk in darkness and stumble in great foolishness." The Only Begotten is light by nature, beaming forth from God the Father who is light by nature. . . . But we must note again that he says that he is the light not especially or solely for the people of Israel but for "all the world." Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.[16]

8:12b *Walking in the Light of Life*

The Sun Leaves, but Christ Remains the Light of Life. Augustine: [That unfailing Light] has taken you from the eyes of the flesh and brought you back again to the eyes of the

[5]Gregory's term for baptism. [6]Ps 34:5 (33:6 LXX). [7]The condition of humanity before the fall. [8]Jn 1:5. [9]NPNF 2 7:352. [10]*MCSW* 162. [11]*HBM* 98*. [12]Is 9:1-2. [13]CSCO 4 3:164-65. [14]Literally, two natures, not two beings. However, this does not necessarily imply Monophysitic tendencies. Ammonius, in typical Alexandrian fashion, stresses the oneness of the hypostatic union against a Nestorian understanding, which divided Christ. See also Cyril on this point (LF 43 1:563-64). [15]*JKGK* 263. [16]LF 43:562-63**.

heart! He does not think it enough to say . . . "shall have light" but adds "of life," even as in the psalm it was said, "[In your light shall we see light]; for with you is the fountain of life."[17] See how the words of our Lord agree with the truth of that psalm where light is placed with the fountain of life and now here he speaks of the "light of life." For bodily uses, light is one thing and a well another. Our mouths seek a fountain; our eyes seek the light. When we thirst, we seek a fountain; when we are in darkness we seek light. And if we happen to get thirsty in the night, we kindle a light to come to a fountain. With God the light and the well are the same. The one who shines on you so that you may see him is the same one who flows to you so that you may drink him.

You see then what kind of light this is if you see inwardly the light of which he says, "He that follows me shall not walk in darkness." Follow the sun, and let us see if you will not walk in darkness. When the sun rises, it comes toward you and heads on to the west. But perhaps your journey is toward the east. So if you follow the sun, then you will certainly err and instead of going east you will go west, whether by land . . . or by sea. Finally, you decide that you should follow the sun, and you travel to the west, where it also travels. Let us see if, after it sets, you will not still walk in darkness. See how, though you are unwilling to desert it, yet it will desert you in order to finish out its service for the day. But our Lord Jesus Christ, even when he was not made known to all through the cloud of his flesh, still held all things by the power of his wisdom. Your God is everywhere entirely. If you do not fall away from him, he will never fall away from you. Tractates on the Gospel of John 34.5-6.[18]

Future Promise, Present Duty. Augustine: What he has promised he has put in the future tense. Notice, he doesn't say "has" but "shall have the light of life." And yet, he does not say "he that shall follow me" but "he who follows me." He puts in the present tense what our duty is, but in the future tense what he has promised to do. . . . What we follow now by faith we shall have hereafter by sight. . . . When shall we walk by sight? When, in the future, we have the light of life and come to that vision whereby this night will have passed away. Tractates on the Gospel of John 34.7.[19]

Israel Followed the Light in the Desert as We Do Now. Cyril of Alexandria: Since he knew they would challenge him, he fashions his speech after a more ancient image of things that also draws on the experience of their ancestors. . . . For when Israel was crossing the wide desert, hurrying to the promised land, a cloud was suspended over them like a canopy during the day, driving off the sun's flame. By night a pillar of fire contended with the darkness and marked out for the travelers their unerring road. For just as they escaped from straying who at that time followed the fire that guided and led them—being led straight to their right and holy ground without having to deal with the night or darkness—so "the one who follows me," that is, "who follows in the tracks of my teachings," will not be left in the dark but will gain "the light of life," that is, "the revelation of my mysteries that are able to lead him by the hand to everlasting life." Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.[20]

Tacit Praise of Nicodemus. Chrysostom: He uses "light" and "darkness" in a spiritual sense, meaning "do not remain in error." Here he tacitly praises Nicodemus . . . and the officers . . . and censures those who were secretly plotting against him as being in darkness and error but who will be unable to overcome the light.[21] Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.2.[22]

8:13 *Your Record Is Not True*

[17]Ps 36:9 (35:10 LXX, Vg). [18]NPNF 1 7:201-2**. [19]NPNF 1 7:202**. [20]LF 43:564**. [21]See Jn 1:5. Alternate translation: "unable to come to the light." Chrysostom's comment makes more sense when one realizes that his text did not include Jn 8:1-11. [22]NPNF 1 14:187-88**.

The Pharisees Falsely Accuse Jesus. Cyril of Alexandria: Who can rightly say, "I am the light of the world," except one who is truly God by nature? Let the Pharisees go through the entire divinely inspired Scripture and search into the sacred and divine Word and show us who of the holy prophets ever dared to say such a thing or when an angel ever made such a claim. . . . The crowd of Pharisees thought that he spoke falsely. In their exceeding foolishness, they had no idea that there are those who set forth their own nature and tell what is essentially inherent in them, not out of boasting or because they are bent on making a name for themselves. Rather, they are simply declaring what they really are. . . . And so, even when our Savior Christ says that he is the light, he is speaking the truth and will not be found boasting. . . . But they attack him as though he is one of us. Without hesitation they say "Your record is not true" of the one who cannot lie. And yet, he decided to lead by the hand those who had gone astray . . . telling them what they had missed about him when they committed sacrilege by ascribing love of lying to him who is from above and begotten of God the Father. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.[23]

8:14 *Jesus' Witness of Himself Is True*

God Is a Competent Witness to Himself. Chrysostom: In order to refute their arguments and to show that he adapted his expressions to address the suspicions of those who thought he was no more than a mere man, our Lord says, "Though I bear record of myself, my record is still true." And he adds the reason, "For I know where I come from," in other words, I am from God, I am God and the Son of God. Now, God is surely a competent witness to himself. Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.2.[24]

A Light Enlightens Others and Makes Itself Known. Augustine: The light shows both other things and also itself. You light a lamp, for instance, to look for your coat, and the burning lamp affords you light to find your coat. Do you light the lamp to see the lamp itself when it burns? A burning lamp is indeed capable at the same time of exposing to view other things that the darkness covered and of showing itself to your eyes. . . . The witness of the light then is true, whether it shows itself or other things. For without light you cannot see light, and without light you cannot see any thing else that is not light. If light is capable of showing other things that are not lights, is it not capable of showing itself? . . . Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ is a competent witness to himself. Tractates on the Gospel of John 35.4, 6.[25]

Jesus Refers to the Father. Augustine: "For, I know where I come from and where I am going." This has reference to the Father; for the Son, who is himself equal [to the Father], gave glory to him by whom he was sent. How greatly then should one glorify the Creator who made him! . . . He did not separate from his Father, however, when he came, or desert us when he returned—unlike that sun which in going to the west leaves the east. Tractates on the Gospel of John 35.4-5.[26]

Not Everyone Sees the Light. Augustine: A burning lamp is indeed capable at the same time of exposing to view other things that the darkness covered and of showing itself to your eyes. So also the Lord Christ distinguished between his faithful ones and his enemies, as between light and darkness: as between those whom he illuminated with the ray of faith and those on whose closed eyes he shed his light. So, too, the sun shines on the face of the sighted and of the blind. Both alike, while standing and facing the sun, have the sun shine on them, but both are not enlightened in the eyesight. The one sees; the other does not. The sun is present to both, but one of them is absent from the present sun. So

[23]LF 43:565, 567-68**. [24]NPNF 1 14:188**. [25]NPNF 1 7:205-6*. [26]NPNF 1 7:205-6*.

likewise the Wisdom of God, the Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is everywhere present because truth is everywhere, wisdom is everywhere . . . Therefore the light bears witness to itself. It opens the healthy eyes and is its own witness so that it may be known as the light. . . . It is also present [to unbelievers], but they do not have the eyes of the heart with which to see it. Tractates on the Gospel of John 35.4.[27]

8:15 *Judging After the Flesh*

They See the Man, Not God. Augustine: These Jews then saw the man; they neither perceived nor believed him to be God. Tractates on the Gospel of John 36.3.[28]

They Judge Badly While Christ Defers His Judgment. Chrysostom: Just as living after the flesh means to live badly, so judging after the flesh is to judge badly. . . . And so he is saying that they judge unjustly. "But if we judge unjustly," someone might say, then why do you not rebuke us? Why do you not punish us? Why do you not condemn us?" "Because," Jesus says, "This is not what I came for." This is the meaning of "I judge no one." Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.2.[29]

Judgment Deferred. Augustine: This question may be solved in two ways: I judge no man, that is, I do not judge him now. He says this elsewhere: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved."[30] It is not that he abandons his justice but rather only defers it. Or, having said, "You judge according to the flesh," he says immediately, "I judge no man." He adds this to let you know that Christ does not judge according to the flesh, as people judged him. Therefore let no scruple of doubt remain in our heart against the faith that we hold and declare concerning Christ as judge. Christ is come first to save but then to judge. Tractates on the Gospel of John 36.4.[31]

8:16 *My Judgment Is True*

Jesus Judges with the Father. Augustine: Let it not by any means surprise anyone that he says, "My judgment is true"; because I am not alone, but it is I and the Father that sent me that judge.[32] Tractates on the Gospel of John 36.12.[33]

The Father and the Son Are Two, and Yet Inseparable. Tertullian: When . . . [Jesus] declares that he is not alone and uses these words, "but I and the Father who sent me," does he not show that there are two—two and yet inseparable? Indeed, this was the sum and substance of what he was teaching them, that they [i.e., Father and Son] were inseparably two. [This must be the case] since, after citing the law when it affirms the truth of two men's testimony, he adds at once: "I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf." Now, if he were one—being at once both the Son and the Father—he certainly would not have quoted the sanction of the law, which requires not the testimony of one but of two. Against Praxeas 22.[34]

The Son Proceeds but Is No Less in Dignity. Cyril of Alexandria: But we must know that by his saying again that he was sent, he does not show that he is second in dignity to the Father. For we must not imagine a mission befitting a servant, even though, because he was clothed in a servant's form, he might rightly say even this of himself. But he was sent as Word from Mind, as the Sun's radiance from itself. For these I suppose are processions[35] from those things in which they are, from their appearing to issue forth,[36] yet they exist naturally and immovably in those things from which they come. For

[27]NPNF 1 7:205*. [28]NPNF 1 7:208. [29]NPNF 1 14:188**. [30]Jn 3:17. [31]NPNF 1 7:209*. [32]Augustine refers us to his comments on Jn 5:27 that the Son will be visible in the judgment while the Father will not. [33]NPNF 1 7:213*. [34]ANF 3:617*. [35]Gk *ekphantika*. [36]Gk *prokuptein*.

we should not suppose that the things that mind and sun have produced, that is, Word or radiance, are devoid of Word or radiance once they have gone forth from them. . . . For mind will never be wordless, nor will words ever exist without the mind that fashioned them. Commentary on the Gospel of John 4.5.[37]

8:17 *The Validity in the Law of Two Witnesses*

The Rule of Law Respected in Jesus' Testimony. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Your law, [he says], states that any case about which there is doubt is settled if two testimonies are given about it. Therefore according to the will of the law, there must be two witnesses besides the one about whom the testimony is given. If the Father and the Son, as divinity, testify in favor of the human nature of our Lord, the rule of law is respected. Commentary on John 3.8.17-18.[38]

Two or Three Witnesses Intimates the Trinity. Augustine: It is a huge question, my brothers, and to me it certainly appears to be a mystery when God says, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established." . . . It is possible, however, that two witnesses may lie. The chaste Susannah was arraigned by two false witnesses. . . . The whole people spoke against Christ falsely. . . . How then must we understand the word "By the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established," except as an intimation of the mystery of the Trinity in which there is a perpetual stability of truth? Do you wish to have a good cause? Have two or three witness: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. . . . Receive our testimony then [the Trinity says], otherwise you will feel our judgment. . . . I delay my judgment, [Jesus says]. I do not delay my testimony. Tractates on the Gospel of John 36.10.[39]

8:18 *The Father Bears Witness*

The Equality of Honor of the Father and of the Son. Chrysostom: It is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. If this is to be taken literally, in what respect does our Lord differ from human beings? The rule has been laid down for humanity on the ground that one man alone is not to be relied on. But how can this be applicable to God? . . . These words are quoted then with another meaning. When two men bear witness, both to an impersonal matter, their witness is true. This constitutes the testimony of two men. But if one of them bears witness to himself, then they are no longer two witnesses. Thus our Lord means to show that he is consubstantial with the Father, and does not need another witness, that is, besides the Father's, "I and the Father that sent me." . . . Again, on human principles, when a person bears witness, his honesty is assumed. And a person is admitted as a fair and competent witness in an impersonal matter but not in one relating to himself unless he is supported by other testimony. But here it is quite the opposite. Our Lord, though giving testimony in his own case, and though saying that he is borne witness to by another, pronounces himself worthy of belief, thus, showing his all-sufficiency. He says that he deserves to be believed. Homilies on the Gospel of John 52.3.[40]

8:19 *Ignorance of Christ Is Ignorance of the Father*

The Son Is the Doorway to the Father. Cyril of Alexandria: Those who suppose that Christ is the son of Joseph or was born as a result of fornication and who do not know that the Word shone forth from God the Father—how can such people not understand Jesus' words, "You know neither me nor my Father"? If they had known that the Word has shone forth from the Father and was for our sakes made in the flesh

[37]LF 43:478*. [38]CSCO 4 3:169. [39]NPNF 1 7:212**. [40]NPNF 1 14:188-89**.

according to the divine Scripture, then they would have known the one who begat Jesus. For those who zealously seek after knowledge are given accurate knowledge of the Father through the Son. . . . The Father and the Son are mutually revealing. When the Father is mentioned, one recalls his offspring, and similarly when the Son is mentioned we remember the one who begat him. And so, the Son is like the doorway leading to knowledge of the Father, and it is in this sense that Jesus says, "No one comes to the Father but by me."[41] Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.2.[42]

I and the Father Are One. Augustine: "If you knew me you would know my Father also." What does this mean, except "I and the Father are one"?[43] It is a common expression used when you see one person very much like another. . . . If you have seen him or her, you have seen the other. You say this because they are so alike. . . . And so our Lord says, "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also." It is not that the Father is the Son, but that the Son is like the Father. Tractates on the Gospel of John 37.7.[44]

Who Is the Creator? Origen: It is necessary to observe that the heterodox think that this text proves clearly that the God whom the Jews worshiped was not the Father of Christ. For if, they say, the Savior said "you know neither me nor my Father" to the Pharisees who worshiped the Creator,[45] then it is evident that the Pharisees did not know the Father of Jesus because he was different from the Creator. . . . But they who say these things have not understood the divine Scriptures or observed the usage of language in them. . . .

If anyone knew about the Creator and his priestly service, the sons of Eli did, having been raised at the place of worship. Yet, because they sinned, it is written of them in the First Book of Kings that they . . . "did not know the Lord."[46] . . .

So, again, the Pharisees did not know the Father since they did not live according to the Creator's will. For knowing God can also refer to *knowing* God, which is something different from merely believing in him. . . . But who could not agree that the words written in the Psalms, "Be still and know that I am God,"[47] were written for a people who believe in the Creator? Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.12-13, 15-17.[48]

Knowing God and Knowing the Father. Origen: There is a difference between knowing God and believing in him. To the Pharisees, to whom he says, "You neither know me nor my Father," he had the right to say, "You do not even believe in my Father," for he who denies the Son does not have the Father, either by faith or knowledge. But Scripture gives us another sense of knowing a thing, that is, being joined to that thing. Adam knew his wife when he was joined to her. . . . If one who has joined to a prostitute has known the prostitute and one who has joined to his wife has known his wife, then one who has joined to the Lord has known the Lord in a holy manner. And in this sense the Pharisees neither knew the Father nor the Son. . . .

Maybe it is possible for someone to know God and yet not know the Father. For if there is one aspect of him in accordance with which he is Father and another in which he is God, perhaps it is possible for someone to know God but not to know the Father. . . . Therefore among an infinite number of prayers offered up in the law, we do not find any one addressed to God as "Father." Perhaps it is because they did not know the Father. They only pray to him as God and Lord, . . . not anticipating the grace shed by Jesus over the whole world, calling all to sonship and to praise the Father in the midst of the assembly, as it is written, "I will declare your name to my brothers." Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.21-24, 26-28.[49]

[41]Jn 14:6. [42]LF 43:575**. [43]Jn 10:30. [44]NPNF 1 7:215**. [45]Gk *demiourgos*. [46]1 Sam 2:12; First Samuel was called First Kings in the Septuagint. [47]Ps 46:10 (45:11 LXX). [48]FC 89:169-70**; SC 290:52-54. [49]FC 89:171-74**; SC 290:58-64.

8:20a *Jesus Spoke in the Treasury*

Jesus' Gift to the Treasury Is His Words. Origen: The Evangelist would not have added these words were it not to convey something useful. . . . Whenever it says "these are the words that he spoke in such and such a place," you will discover a reason for the addition. . . .

The treasury was a place where coins were contributed for the honor of God and the support of the poor. What else would these coins be than the divine words that have the image of the great King stamped on them and that are examined by trustworthy money changers who know how to separate counterfeit coins from the genuine ones? . . .

But if everyone contributed to the temple treasury in support of the needy for the common good, Jesus, more than anyone else was surely a worthy contributor. He gave the words of eternal life and his teaching about God and himself. His statement, "I am the light of the world," which was spoken in the treasury, was more valuable than any coin . . . as were all his other teachings in that place. And all the gold of the others who brought what they had into the treasury was like a bit of sand in comparison to the words of Jesus, for every word of his was wisdom.[50] Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.40, 43-44, 53-55.[51]

8:20b *Jesus' Hour Had Not Yet Come*

The Hour of His Choosing. Augustine: This is an instance of power, not of necessity. He waited for this hour. It was not the fated but the fitting and voluntary hour. This was that all might first be fulfilled that was supposed to be fulfilled before his death. Tractates on the Gospel of John 37.9.[52]

[50]See Wis 7:9. [51]FC 89:177-78, 180-81**; SC 290:70-74, 80. [52]NPNF 1 7:216*.

JESUS' AUTHORITY COMES FROM THE FATHER
JOHN 8:21-30

Overview: Jesus tells those who opposed him that they will seek him and die in their sins. But can those who do not believe be said to seek Jesus (Origen)? There are two ways to pursue the life of Jesus: to possess it or destroy it (Augustine). Seeing their unbelief, Jesus threatens to leave (Origen). This encounter demonstrates that divine wisdom is not of this world and that those from below can only learn from those above (Clement). Those from below are the ones who store up treasures on earth (Origen).

Jesus contrasts himself with them since it is obvious that he who created the world and existed before its creation is not of this world (Augustine, Chrysostom) or any other, for that matter (Cyril of Alexandria). Believers are not of this world either and will not die in their sins, but those who do not believe allow their sin to kill them (Origen). Faith, however, cannot always comprehend the "I AM," and so it is good that he said "believe" and not "comprehend" (Augustine). Jesus goes on to tell them that he has been consistent in his revelation to them from the beginning (Chrysostom). Or perhaps Jesus is referring to himself in this text as *the* beginning, that is, as the one who has always existed. In other words, he is the Word who was "in the beginning." Moving from the beginning to the end, Jesus prophesies about a future judgment (Augustine). By doing so, he holds in check the contempt they showed for him (Chrysostom) while demonstrating that his judgment is true because the Father's word is spoken in the Son (Tertullian). In his prophecy of judgment, Jesus also foretells the conversion of his killers, who will then know who he is. His prophecy concerning his "lifting up" is about his suffering on the cross, not his glorification (Augustine). Despite all the miracles he has done, they still do not believe, and therefore he turns to speaking of the cross, which along with the resurrection will reveal his divinity (Cyril of Alexandria).

The Father gave the Son existence by begetting, not by creating, and in this begetting also gave him the knowledge that a father gives to his son, without the Son being in any way deficient. The Father sent his Son to earth for the mission of the incarnation (Augustine), and nothing he has done can be shown to have been in conflict with that mission or with the will of his Father. His humility here in subjecting himself to the Father, in effect, wins over the crowd (Chrysostom).

8:21-22 *Seeking Jesus and Dying in Sin*

Will Unbelief Seek Jesus? Origen: Someone will object: If he said this to those who persist in unbelief, how does he say to such people, "You will seek me"? It is good to seek Jesus, since it is the same as seeking the Word, the truth and wisdom. You may answer that "seeking" was also said of those who plotted against him. . . . There are differences between those seeking Jesus. Not all seek him legitimately for their salvation or benefit. People seek Jesus with countless motives that fall short of the good. Only those who seek him in a right way find peace. They may be said to seek him in a right way who seek the Word that was in the beginning with God, who seek him that he might lead them to the Father. Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.71-74.[1]

Two Ways of Pursuit. Augustine: "I go away," he said, "and you shall seek me," not from any longing for me but in hatred. For after his removal from human sight, he was sought for both by those who hated him and those who loved him; by the former in a spirit of persecution, by the latter with the desire of seizing him. . . . Accordingly, because the former sought it in this wrong way, with a perverted heart, what did he add next? "You shall seek me, and"—not to let you suppose that you will seek me for good—"you shall die in your sin." Dying in one's sins happens to those who seek Christ wrongly. It happens to those who hate the one through whom alone salvation could be found. For while

[1]FC 89:184-85**; SC 290:90-92.

those whose hope is in God should not render evil even for evil, these men were rendering evil for good. The Lord therefore announced to them beforehand and in his foreknowledge uttered the sentence that they should die in their sin. And then he adds, "Where I am going, you cannot come." He said the same to the disciples also in another place.[2] And yet he did not say to them, "You shall die in your sin." But what did he say? He said the same as he did to these men: "Where I am going, you cannot come." He did not take away hope but foretold delay. For at the time when the Lord said this to the disciples, they were not able to come where he was going, yet they were to come afterwards. But these men would never come. And so in his foreknowledge he said to them, "You shall die in your sin." Tractates on the Gospel of John 38.2.[3]

The Word Threatens to Depart. Origen: If the Word is not received when present, he threatens to go. . . .

As long as we preserve the seeds and principles of truth that have been sown in our souls, the Word has not yet departed from us. But if we utterly destroy them with a flood of wickedness, he will say to us, "I go." And then, even if we seek him, we will not find him but will die in our sin, overtaken in our sin and swept away by it. . . .

And we must not pass over without noticing the expression "you will die in your sins." If it is taken in the ordinary sense, it is clear that sinners will die in their sin and the righteous in their righteousness. But if "you will die" is taken in relation to death, the enemy of Christ,[4] since the one who dies has committed a sin that leads to death, then it is clear that those to whom this is spoken have not yet died. . . .

Those to whom the Word had not yet come had not committed sin that leads to death. Still, they were spiritually sick, a sickness tending toward death. The Physician, seeing that they were deadly ill, after he had despaired of healing them, said, "I go, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sin." . . .

Perhaps the statement "where I go you cannot come," attached to "you will die in your sin," will be clearer. For whenever someone dies in his sin, he cannot go where Jesus goes, for no one who is dead can follow Jesus: "For the dead do not praise you, O Lord."[5] Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.74, 78-81, 83.[6]

8:23 *Of This World or Not of This World*

Those from Below Learn from Him Who Is Above. Clement of Alexandria: We are those who bear about with us, in this living and moving image of our human nature, the likeness of God. It is a likeness that lives with us, takes counsel with us, associates with us, is a guest with us, feels with us and feels for us. We have become a consecrated offering to God for Christ's sake. We are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people who once were not a people but are now the people of God.[7] We are those who, according to John, are not of those who are beneath but have learned all from him who came from above; who have come to understand the dispensation of God; who have learned to walk in newness of life. Exhortation to the Greeks 4.[8]

Who Is from Below? Origen: But pay attention, if you also desire to learn from Scripture who it is who is from below and who it is who is from above. Since each person's treasure is where his heart is, if someone stores up treasure on earth,[9] by the very act of storing up treasure on earth he is from below. But if someone stores up treasure in heaven,[10] that person is born from above and assumes "the image of the heavenly."[11] And in addition, when this person has passed through all the heavens, he is found to have

[2]Jn 13:33. [3]NPNF 1 7:217-18*. Origen asks if it is possible that those who persist in unbelief seek Jesus; see *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 19.71 (FC 89:184-85). [4]1 Cor 15:26. [5]Ps 115:17 (113:25 LXX). [6]FC 89:185-87**; SC 290:92-98. [7]1 Pet 2:9. [8]ANF 2:189**. [9]Mt 6:21. [10]Mt 6:20. [11]See Jn 3:3; 1 Cor 15:49.

reached the most blessed goal. Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.138.[12]

How Could the Creator Be of This World? Augustine: How could Jesus be of the world when he made the world? Tractates on the Gospel of John 38.4.[13]

Divine Wisdom Is Not of This World. Chrysostom: Here again he speaks of their worldly and carnal imaginations. It is clear that "I am not of this world" does not mean that he had not taken flesh on himself but that he was far removed from their wickedness. Homilies on the Gospel of John 53.1.[14]

Christ Is Not of This World or Any Other. Cyril of Alexandria: Here he clearly shows what he means by "above" and "below." The Pharisees would have understood what he said in a bodily way, thinking the "above" and "below" were localities. That is why our Lord clarifies what he had previously said so obscurely. For he says, "You are of this world," that is, from beneath; "I am not of this world," speaking of what is from above. For God surpasses all that is created. His superiority is not a localized kind of exaltation (as if the incorporeal could be conceived in any way as local, except by the foolish and utterly uninstructed). Rather, he surpasses derivative beings because of his own most excellent and ineffable nature. It is of this essence that the Word says he is. He has not been created by it. He is its fruit and offspring. For notice how he does not say, "I have been created and made from above" but instead says, "I am," in order to show both where he came from and also that he was always and eternally with his own progenitor. For he *is* even as the Father too *is*. . . .

But the enemy of the truth . . . will say that by adding "this," Christ has shown that there is another world, the spiritual world, from which he might have come, implying the Son is a creature . . . in the same class as angels[15] who . . . if he is not part of this world, is part of another. . . . But the word *this* or "of this" is a demonstrative pronoun that does not necessarily imply comparison with another. . . . Therefore when Christ says, "I am not of this world," he is not saying that he is part of some other world but is . . . putting the Jews in the place of things that have an origin, saying, "You are of this world" while he severs himself altogether from things created and connects himself instead with that other place, and by this I mean the Godhead, when he says, "I am not of this world." In this way, he contrasts the Godhead with the world so that we can understand. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.4.[16]

8:24 *Unless You Believe, You Will Die in Your Sins*

Believers in Christ Will Not Die in Their Sins. Origen: Now, if the one who does not believe that Jesus is the Christ will die in his sins, it is clear that the one who does not die in his sins has believed in the Christ. But he who dies in his sins, even if he says that he believes in the Christ, has not believed in him so far as truth is concerned. And if faith is mentioned but it lacks works, such faith is dead.[17] . . . For one who believes in [Christ's] justice does not do injustice. One who believes in his wisdom would not say or do anything foolish. . . . And if we collected the remaining attributes of Christ, we will easily discover that whoever does not believe in Christ will die in his sins because he comes to be the very opposite of what is seen in Christ. The sins themselves kill him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 19.152, 155, 158.[18]

Believing Versus Comprehending the "I AM." Augustine: What is this, "If you do not believe that I am"? "I am" what? There is nothing

[12]FC 89:198; SC 290:128-30. [13]NPNF 1 7:218*. [14]NPNF 1 14:190*. [15]This is what Origen had unwittingly done in his commentary, but so had the Arian Asterius, who in *Fragment* 3 had called the Son the "first of derivative beings." See Wiles, 78-79 n. 4, and also Athanasius *De Synodis* 19. [16]LF 43:586-89**. [17]Jas 2:17. [18]FC 89:202-4**; SC 290:140-44.

added. And because he added nothing . . . there is much implied in his only saying "I am," for God had used the same words with Moses, "I am who am."[19] Who can adequately express what that I AM means?[20]. . . For all excellence, whatever kind it is, if it is changeable, it does not truly exist. There is no true existence wherever nonexistence also has a place. For whatever can be changed, so far as it is changed, it is not what it was: if it is no longer what it was, a kind of death has therein taken place. Something that was there has been eliminated and exists no more. . . . For in all actions and movements of ours, yes, in every activity of the creature, I find two indications of time, the past and the future. I seek for the present, but nothing stands still. What I have said is no longer present. What I am going to say is not yet come. What I have done is no longer present. What I am going to do is not yet come. The life I have lived is no longer present. The life I have still to live is not yet come. Past and future I find in every creature-movement. I do not find either past or future in what is abiding. There I only find the unchangeable present that finds no place in the creature. Analyze the idea of mutability, and you will find *was* and *will be*: contemplate God, and you will find the *is* where *was* and *will be* cannot exist. . . . And so, by these words, "If you do not believe that I am," I think our Lord meant nothing else than this, "If you do not believe that I am" God, "you shall die in your sins." Well, God be thanked that he said, "If you do not believe" and did not say: If you do not comprehend. For who can comprehend this? Tractates on the Gospel of John 38.8, 10.[21]

8:25 *Even What I Have Told You from the Beginning*[22]

Jesus Has Been Consistent About Who He Is. Chrysostom: They ask, "Who are you?" Such a lack of understanding! After such a long time with all of his signs and teaching they still ask, "Who are you?" What then does Christ say? "The same that I told you from the beginning."[23] What he is saying is: You are not worthy to hear my words at all, much less to learn who I am. For everything you say is an attempt to tempt me. But you have not even listened to one of the things I have said. And all these things I am now able to prove against you. Homilies on the Gospel of John 53.1.[24]

Jesus Calls Himself the Beginning. Augustine: "Who are you," that we may believe? He answered, "The beginning." Here is the existence that [always] is. The beginning cannot be changed. The beginning is self-abiding and all-originating, that is, the beginning, to which it has been said, "But you yourself are the same and your years shall not fail."[25] . . . Believe me to be the beginning so that you may not die in your sins. By saying, "Who are you?" they had said nothing else than this, "What shall we believe you to be?" He replied, "The beginning," that is, Believe me to be "the beginning."[26] Tractates on the Gospel of John 38.11.[27]

In the Beginning Was the Word. Augustine: "In the beginning was the Word."[28] That through which he made things already was. That is how he made what as yet was not. We can understand it, and rightly understand it, in the sense that heaven and earth were made in the only begotten Word itself. They were, you see, made in that through which they were made. This can be, and be understood as, the beginning in which God made heaven and earth. This Word, after all, is also the wisdom of God, about which it is said, "You have made all things in wisdom."[29] If God made all things in wisdom and his

[19]Ex 3:14. [20]Augustine then rehearses the account of the burning bush on Mount Sinai and how even Moses perhaps could not even fully comprehend the phrase. [21]NPNF 1 7:220-21**. [22]The Latin variant "*principium quia/qui et loquor vobis,*" that is, "The beginning who also speaks to you," allows Augustine's interpretation below. [23]Chrysostom, like other Greek commentators, understands *tēn archēn* adverbially, whereas Latin commentators treat it as a noun. [24]NPNF 1 14:191**. [25]Ps 102:27 (101:28 LXX, Vg). [26]Augustine then enters into a discussion of the Greek text to verify his interpretation. [27]NPNF 1 7:221**. [28]Jn 1:1. [29]Ps 104:24 (103:24 LXX, Vg).

only begotten Son is without a shadow of doubt the wisdom of God, let us not doubt that whatever we have learned was made through the Son was also made in the Son. The Son himself, after all, is certainly the beginning. When the Jews were questioning him and saying, "Who are you? He answered, "The beginning." And there [in Genesis] you have, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth."[30] Sermon 223a.1.[31]

8:26-27 *Much to Say and Judge*

A Future Judgment. Augustine: Remember when he said, "I judge no one"?[32] Now he says, "I have many things to say of you and to judge." But "I do not judge," is one thing, "I have to judge" is another. For he had come to save the world, not to judge the world.[33] When he says, "I have many things to say of you and to judge," he refers to a future judgment when, after he ascended, he would come back to judge the living and the dead. Tractates on the Gospel of John 39.6.[34]

True Judgment. Augustine: When he says, "He that sent me is true," it is as if he said, Therefore I too shall be true in my judgment, because as the Son of the true One, I am the truth. . . . The Son is the Truth, the Father is true. I inquire which is the greater, but [when I inquire, I] find equality. For the true Father is true not because he contained a part of that truth but because he begat truth in its entirety. Tractates on the Gospel of John 39.7.[35]

Judgment Guards Against Contempt. Chrysostom: He says this so that they may not think that he allows them to talk against him with impunity, or from inability to punish them or that he is not aware of their secret thoughts and contempt. Homilies on the Gospel of John 53.1.[36]

The Father's Words Uttered in the Son. Tertullian: By reason of the inseparability of the two it was impossible for one of them to be either acknowledged or unknown without the other. "He who sent me," says Jesus, "is true; and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." And the Scripture narrative goes on to explain in a simple way that "they did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father," although they certainly ought to have known that the Father's words were uttered in the Son, because they read in Jeremiah, "And the Lord said to me, see, I have put my words in your mouth."[37] Against Praxeas 22.[38]

8:28 *Lifting Up the Son of Man*

Jesus Foretells Conversion of His Killers. Augustine: What does this mean? For it looks as if all he said was that they would know who he was after his passion. Without doubt, therefore, he saw that there were some there, whom he himself knew, who would believe after his passion. . . . We are here speaking of those three thousand and those five thousand Jews whom now he saw there,[39] when he said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know that I am." It was as if he had said, I am not allowing you to recognize what happened until I have completed my passion. Tractates on the Gospel of John 40.2.[40]

"Lifting Up" Is His Suffering, Not Glorification. Augustine: When it is appropriate, you shall know who I am. Not that all who heard him were only then to believe, that is, after the Lord's passion. For a little after it is said, "As he spoke these words, many believed on him," and the Son of man was not yet lifted up. But the lifting up he is speaking of is that of his passion, not of his glorification, of the cross, not of heaven. For he was exalted there also when he hung on the tree. But that exaltation was his humiliation, for then he became obedient even to the death of the

[30]Gen 1:1. [31]*WSA* 3 6:212-13*. [32]Jn 8:15. [33]Jn 12:47. [34]NPNF 1 7:224**. [35]NPNF 1 7:224**. [36]NPNF 1 14:191**. [37]Jer 1:9. [38]ANF 3:617*. [39]Acts 2:41; 4:4. [40]NPNF 1 7:225*.

cross.[41] This required it to be accomplished by the hands of those who should afterwards believe and to whom he says, "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then shall you know that I am." And why so, except that no one might despair, however guilty his conscience, when he saw those forgiven their homicide who had slain the Christ? Tractates on the Gospel of John 40.2.[42]

The Cross and the Resurrection Will Reveal Jesus' Divinity. Cyril of Alexandria: Here Jesus is saying, "Since you are looking only to the flesh, you believe that I am merely a man, and you suppose that I am just like you. But the dignity and the glory of the Godhead does not even enter your mind. However, you shall know that I am God of true God and Light of light through your dreadful and lawless act—my death on the cross. For when you see your mad foolishness come to nothing and the snare of death crushed in pieces—for I shall surely rise from the dead—ultimately you will be forced, even against your will, to agree with what I said, and you shall confess that I am God by nature. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.4.[43]

How the Son Is Taught by the Father. Augustine: Already the Sabellian, i.e., the Patripassian,[44] was beginning to rejoice over the discovery of a ground for his error, but immediately . . . he is confounded by the light of the following sentence. You thought that he was the Father, because he said, "I am." Hear now that he is the Son: "And I do nothing of myself." What does this mean, "I do nothing of myself"? I am not of myself. For the Son is God of the Father, but the Father is God yet not of the Son. The Son is God of God, and the Father is God but not of God. The Son is Light of light; and the Father is light but not of light. The Son is, but there is [one] of whom he is; and the Father is, but there is none of whom he is.

Do not then let what follows, "As the Father has taught me, I speak these things," suggest a carnal thought to any of you. . . . Do not place as it were two men before your eyes, a Father speaking to his son, as you do when you speak to your sons. . . . How did the Father speak to the Son, seeing that the Son says, "As the Father taught me, I speak these things"? Did he speak to him? When the Father taught the Son, did he use words, as you do when you teach your son? For what words could be spoken to the only Word? . . . If the Father speaks in your hearts without sound, how does he speak to the Son? . . . The Father speaks to the Son incorporeally because he begat the Son incorporeally. He did not teach him, as though having begotten him untaught. Rather, the "teaching him" is the "begetting him" knowledge.[45] . . . For if the nature of truth is simple, *to be,* as regards the Son, is the same as *to know*. . . . As then the Father gave the Son existence by begetting, so he gave him knowledge also. Tractates on the Gospel of John 40.3-5.[46]

8:29 *The Son Always Does What Pleases the Father*

The Father Is with the Son. Augustine: And though both are together, yet one is sent, the other sends. For the mission is the incarnation. And the incarnation is of the Son only, not of the Father. . . . He says then, "He that sent me," meaning by whose Fatherly authority I am made incarnate. Tractates on the Gospel of John 40.6.[47]

Father and Son Always Together. Augustine: The Father sent the Son but did not withdraw from him. For there is no way that the Father was not wherever he sent the Son. For is there anywhere the maker of all things could not be who said, "I fill heaven and earth."[48] . . . And Christ adds the reason why his Father did not leave him: "For I always do those things that please him." That equality *always* exists: not from

[41]Phil 2:8. [42]NPNF 1 7:225*. [43]LF 43:604**. [44]Those who taught that the Father also suffered on the cross. [45]Or "knowing." [46]NPNF 1 7:225-27**. [47]NPNF 1 7:227*. [48]Jer 23:24.

any particular beginning and then onwards, but without beginning and without end. For divine generation has no beginning in time since time itself was created by the Only Begotten. Tractates on the Gospel of John 40.6.[49]

Humility of Jesus' Discourse. Chrysostom: He means it as an answer to those who were constantly saying that he was not from God because he did not keep the sabbath. "I always do," he says, "those things that please him," showing that even the breaking of the sabbath was pleasing to him. . . . He takes care in every way to show that he does nothing contrary to the Father. Homilies on the Gospel of John 53.2.[50]

8:30 *Many Believed in Jesus*

Christ's Humility Persuades Them. Chrysostom: When he brought his speech down to a more human level, many believed in him. Do you still ask why he spoke so humbly? And yet, the Evangelist clearly alludes to the reason [here], all but proclaiming aloud: Do not be disturbed at hearing so humble a speech from Christ, for those who had heard the greatest doctrines from him and were still not persuaded that he was from the Father were persuaded by these more humble words so that they might believe. This explains why he spoke these things in such a humble way. These then believed on him, yet not as they ought but only because they were pleased with the refreshing humility of his words. The Evangelist, in fact, shows their imperfect faith in his subsequent narration, which relates their unjust proceedings against him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 53.2.[51]

[49]NPNF 1 7:227*. [50]NPNF 1 14:191-92**. [51]NPNF 1 14:192**.

PATERNITY DISPUTES
JOHN 8:31-41a

Overview: Our Lord tests the faith of the believers (Chrysostom). It is easier to come to Christ than to continue in him (Augustine). Those who do continue in him shall know the

truth, which is Christ, who gives freedom to those who are justified through faith in him (Cyprian, Cyril). This is his promise to us, something that we cannot fully know but that we believe in order to know. The truth is stamped on us even now, although we have rubbed out much of that stamp by our wanderings. Our freedom comes when we subject ourselves to the truth, since the soul can enjoy no freedom unless it enjoys it in peace. The truth of Christ brings freedom from death, corruption and changeableness (Augustine).

While the Jews may have denied being in bondage, there is a long line of historical fact backing Jesus' assertion that they were slaves (Augustine, Theodore). When Christ says, "Truly, truly" he is taking an oath testifying to his veracity (Augustine). He tells his hearers then and now that they cannot serve God and sin (Irenaeus). Sin will enslave (Gregory of Nyssa). We must break the bonds of that sin with repentance and wash it away with our tears. Otherwise, if we freely follow sin, we become its slave (Gregory the Great). Jesus gives us true freedom as sons and daughters (Theodore) who are freed to love. As long as sin remains, we have only partial freedom (Augustine). It is only Christ who can bring true freedom (Cyril of Alexandria). Once we are free, however, we should not abuse that freedom as license to sin (Augustine).

Instead of claiming the sonship of Abraham, they should have set their sights on an even higher nobility—that of the king of the universe (Cyril of Alexandria). But they continue to count on their claim to Abraham. Just because one is a descendent of Abraham, however, does not mean he is a child of Abraham (Origen). Jesus reminds them of the present sin they are contemplating against him (Chrysostom). Had they understood and believed his words, the Word would have sunk into their hearts, catching them for salvation (Augustine). Instead, his Word has found no place in them. What he is saying comes from the Father, with whom he shares not only his divine substance but also the truth (Chrysostom). Our Lord wants us to understand the truth through understanding him because he is the truth (Augustine) and an eyewitness to what the Father has done (Origen). They too by their actions show who their father is, although Christ as of yet has not chosen to name him (Augustine).

Jesus was still referring to their father as God, but they make a humbler assertion in claiming Abraham (Origen) as if to say, what can you say against Abraham (Augustine)? But Jesus refutes this claim (Origen)—not the fact that their lineage comes from Abraham—but that they bear any resemblance to him in how they are living (Augustine). If they really wanted to be children of Abraham, they should do *all* the works of Abraham (Origen). The fact that they are seeking to kill Jesus shows they are not his children, nor do they have access to the truth (Eusebius).They instead are seeking to kill "a man," he says, who has told the truth, asserting his humanity (Origen) while at the same time asserting his equality with the Father because he has heard this truth from the Father (Chrysostom). Their hatred of Jesus is the antithesis of what Abraham did when he longed to see Jesus' day arrive. In other words, they may be children of Abraham, but the fruit they produce shows whose children they really are (Origen).

8:31 *Disciples Continue in Christ's Word*

Testing the Faith of the Believers. Chrysostom: Beloved, our condition needs much endurance; and endurance is best produced when doctrines are deeply rooted. For just as there is no wind that is able to tear up an oak tree by its assaults because it sends down its root deep into the earth, so too the soul that is nailed by the fear of God—not just rooted but nailed—will not be able to be overturned. . . . Our Lord wanted to test the faith of those who believed so that it might not be merely superficial, and so he digs deeper into their souls by a more striking word. . . . And so, when he said, "If you continue,"

he made it clear what was in their hearts. He knew that some believed but would not continue. And he makes them a magnificent promise, that is, that they shall become his disciples indeed. These words are a tacit rebuke to some who had believed and afterwards withdrawn because they could not continue. Homilies on the Gospel of John 54.1.[1]

Easier to Come Than Continue. Augustine: It is a small thing for a disciple to come to him; it is a much greater thing to continue in him. Therefore he does not say if you "hear" or "come" or "praise" my Word. He says, "If you continue in my Word." What do you think, brothers? Is continuing in the Lord hard work or not? If it is hard work, look at the reward. If it is not, you receive the reward for nothing. Let us then continue in him who continues in us. Sermon 84.1.[2]

The Importance of Patience and Perseverance. Cyprian: We must endure and persevere, beloved brothers, so that once we have the hope of truth and freedom, we may actually attain them. For the very fact that we are Christians is the substance of faith and hope. But if hope and faith are going to achieve their result, there must be patience. For we are not following after present but future glory. . . . Therefore, waiting and patience are needed so that we may fulfill what we have begun to be and may receive what we believe and hope for according to God's own appearing. The Good of Patience 9.13.[3]

8:32 *The Truth Will Set You Free*

The Truth Is Christ, the Giver of Freedom. Cyril of Alexandria: This saying of Jesus persuades those who believe to leave behind worship that is according to the law.[4] It teaches us that the shadow [i.e., the law] is our guide to the knowledge of him and that, leaving the types and figures behind, we should go resolutely forward to the truth itself, which is Christ the giver of true freedom, who is also our Redeemer. . . .

And so, true salvation is not in the ordinances of the law, nor will anyone win the thrice-longed for freedom from sin by observing the law. Rather, bounding a little above the types and surveying the beauty of worship in the Spirit and acknowledging the truth, that is, Christ, we are justified through faith in him. And justified, we pass over to what is true freedom, no more ranked among the slaves but among the sons of God. . . . For it is only through this truth, that is, Christ, that they shall be entirely free. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.5.[5]

We Believe in Order to Know. Augustine: What does he promise believers? "And you shall know the truth." Why is that? Hadn't they come to such knowledge when the Lord was speaking? If they had not, how did they believe? They believed, not because they knew but so that they might come to know. For we believe in order that we may know. We do not know in order that we may believe. For what we shall yet know, "neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man [humankind]."[6] For what is faith, but believing what you do not see? Faith then is to believe what you do not see. Truth is seeing what you have believed, as Christ himself says in a certain place.[7] . . . But isn't what you [Christ] have been speaking the truth? It is the truth, but as yet it is only believed, not seen. If you abide in what is believed, you shall attain to what is seen.[8] Tractates on the Gospel of John 40.9.[9]

How the Truth Is Reproduced in Us. Augustine: We are God's money: we have wandered away as coin from the treasury. The impression that was stamped on us has been rubbed out by our wandering. He has come to mint us again, for he is the one who minted us in the first place, and he himself is asking for his money, as Caesar asks for his. Therefore he says, "Render unto

[1]NPNF 1 14:193**. [2]NPNF 1 6:510**. [3]ANF 5:487*. [4]Cyril's reference here is to the Jewish sacrificial system. [5]LF 43:623, 625**. [6]Is 64:4; 1 Cor 2:9. [7]Jn 20:29. [8]He then cites 1 Jn 3:2. [9]NPNF 1 7:228*.

Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's,"[10] to Caesar his money, to God yourselves. And then shall the truth be reproduced in us. Tractates on the Gospel of John 40.9.[11]

Truth Brings Freedom. Augustine: Someone might say, And what does it profit me to know the truth? "And the truth shall set you free." If the truth does not appeal to you, then let freedom have its charms. In the Latin we use the word *free* chiefly in the sense of escape from danger, relief from care. But the proper signification of "to be free" is "to be made free," just as "to be saved" is "to be made safe." . . . This is plainer in the Greek. Sermon 84(134).2.[12]

The Soul at Peace. Augustine: Our freedom comes when we subject ourselves to the truth. And this truth is our God who frees us from death, that is, from the condition of sin. For he himself spoke of this truth as a man among people when he spoke to those who believed: "If you remain in my word, then you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." For the soul enjoys nothing in freedom unless it enjoys it in peace.[13] On Free Will 2.13.37.[14]

Truth Frees Us. Augustine: From what shall the truth free us except from death, corruption and changeableness, since truth itself remains immortal, incorrupt and unchangeable? But true immortality, true incorruptibility, true unchangeableness is eternity itself. On the Trinity 4.18.24.[15]

8:33 *Descendants of Abraham Are Not Slaves*

History of Being in Bondage to Man and Sin. Augustine: But the Lord did not say, "You shall be free," but "The truth shall make you free." However, that word [free]—because, as I have said, it is clearly so in the Greek—they understood as pointing only to freedom. They puffed themselves up as Abraham's seed and said, "We are Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to anyone: how is it that you say, 'You shall be free'?" O inflated skin! This is not magnanimity; it is hot air! For even if you want to talk about freedom in this life, how were you truthful when you said, "We were never in bondage to anyone"? Wasn't Joseph sold?[16] Weren't the holy prophets led into captivity?[17] And again, didn't that very nation, when making bricks in Egypt, also serve hard rulers, not only in gold and silver but also in clay?[18] If you were never in bondage to anyone, ungrateful people, why is it that God is continually reminding you that he delivered you from the house of bondage?[19] Or do you perhaps mean that your ancestors were in bondage, but you who speak were never in bondage to anyone? How then were you now paying tribute to the Romans, out of which also you formed a trap for the truth himself, as if to ensnare him?[20] Tractates on the Gospel of John 41.2.[21]

They Lie About Their Freedom. Theodore of Mopsuestia: They did not speak the truth. They had been freed from the bondage of the Egyptians, who were their neighbors, and from that of the Babylonians. And now, when they were speaking these words, they were subjects to the Romans. But our Lord did not lower himself to rebuke them about it, even though they were lying. Commentary on John 3.8.33.[22]

8:34 *Speaking Truly to Slaves of Sin*

Christ's Oath. Augustine: This assertion is important. It is, if one may say so, his oath. "Amen" means *true* but is not translated. Neither the Greek nor the Latin translator has dared to translate it. It is a Hebrew word, and people have

[10]Mt 22:21. [11]NPNF 1 7:228*. [12]NPNF 1 6:510*. [13]Or "security." [14]CCL 29:262. [15]NPNF 1 3:82**. [16]See Gen 37:28. [17]See 2 Kings 24. [18]See Ex 1:14. [19]Ex 13:3; Deut 5:6. [20]Mt 22:17. [21]NPNF 1 7:230*. [22]CSCO 4 3:173.

abstained from translating it in order to throw a reverential veil over so mysterious a word. It is not that they wished to lock it up but only to prevent it from becoming despised by being exposed. How important the word is, you may see from its being repeated. . . . Our Lord has recourse to this mode of enforcing his words, in order to rouse people from their state of sleep and indifference. Tractates on the Gospel of John 41.3-4.[23]

Those Who Serve God Cannot Serve Sin. Irenaeus: Inasmuch, then, as he terms those "the slaves of sin" who serve sin but does not certainly call sin itself God, in this way also he terms those who serve mammon as "the slaves of mammon," not calling mammon God. For mammon is, according to the Jewish language,[24] which the Samaritans also use, a covetous person, and one who wishes to have more than he ought to have. . . . We cannot serve God and mammon. Against Heresies 3.8.1.[25]

Complete Spiritual Wholesomeness. Gregory of Nyssa: "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin," that is, turning to evil in any matter and situation somehow enslaves a person and puts the stigma of a runaway slave on the person, with scars and brands inflicted by the blows of sin. On Virginity 18.[26]

Pierce Sin with Repentance. Gregory the Great: Whoever yields to wrong desires puts his formerly free soul under the yoke of the evil one and takes him for his master. But we oppose this master when we struggle against the wickedness that has laid hold on us, when we strongly resist habit, when we pierce sin with repentance and wash away the spots of filth with tears. Morals on the Book of Job 4.35.71.[27]

Freely Following Desire Is Slavery. Gregory the Great: And the more freely people follow their perverse desires, the more closely they are in bondage to them. Morals on the Book of Job 25.16.34.[28]

Jesus Gives Us True Freedom as Sons and Daughters. Theodore of Mopsuestia: This is what he means: The subject of what I am talking about is not corporeal bondage. I want to talk to you about real freedom. In one instance a master, at his discretion, drives away from the house a servant in whom he sees an evil will and subjects him to any punishment he considers to be appropriate. But . . . no master drives away his son from the house. So, one who is a slave to sin, since he is far removed from all divine goodness, is given a perpetual punishment. But the one who has been made worthy of freedom and has been given the status of son always enjoys divine goodness and can never be removed from it. If you, he says, are freed through me and are made worthy of the title of sons, then you will possess real freedom. Commentary on John 3.8.34-36.[29]

8:35 *The Son Continues Forever*

Liberated for Love. Augustine: He has greatly alarmed us, my brothers, by saying, "The servant does not remain in the house forever." He further adds, however, "But the Son remains forever." Will Christ, then, be alone in his house? Will no people remain at his side? Whose head will he be if there shall be no body? Or is the Son both the head and the body? There is a reason why he inspires both terror and hope: terror so that we do not love sin, and hope so that we should not distrust the remission of sin. "Everyone," he says, "who commits sin is the servant of sin. And the servant does not remain in the house forever." What hope, then, do we have who are not without sin? Listen to your hope: "The Son remains forever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, then shall you be free indeed." Our hope

[23]NPNF 1 7:230-31**. [24]Irenaeus says he has here in mind the Hebrew word *Mamuel*, but the etymology of the word is notoriously difficult to trace. The Hebrew usage to which he refers may be reflected in the Targums, which often use mammon in the way of "dishonest gain," "damage" or "spoiling one's neighbor's property." See *TDNT* 4:389. [25]ANF 1:421. [26]FC 58:59. [27]LF 18:238*. [28]LF 23:125*. [29]CSCO 4 3:173-74.

is this, brothers, to be made free by the free One. Our hope is that, in setting us free, he makes us his servants. For we were the servants of lust; but being set free, we are made the servants of love. This is also what the apostle says: "For, brothers, you have been called to liberty. Only do not use your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."[30] Do not then let the Christian say: I am free; I have been called to freedom. I was a slave but have been redeemed, and by my very redemption I have been made free. I shall do what I please. No one may deny my will if I am free. But if you commit sin with that kind of a will, you are the servant of sin. Do not then abuse your liberty for freedom in sinning, but use it for the purpose of not sinning. For your will is only free if it is godly. You will be free if you are still a servant—free from sin and the servant of righteousness. This is what the apostle says: "When you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. But now, being made free from sin and having become servants to God, you have your fruit unto holiness and the end, which is everlasting life."[31] Let us strive for everlasting life even as we maintain holiness. Tractates on the Gospel of John 41.8.[32]

8:36 *Free Indeed*

Free from Sin, Free for Joy. Augustine: The first stage of freedom, then, is to abstain from sins . . . such as murder, adultery, any sexual sins, theft, fraud, sacrilege, and others of that sort. When someone has started getting free from these (and every Christian ought to be so), he begins to raise his head toward freedom. But that is freedom begun, not completed. Why, says someone, is it not completed freedom? Because "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind"; "for what I want to do," he says, "that I do not do; but what I hate, that I do."[33] "The flesh," he says, "lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that you do not do the things that you want."[34] There is partial freedom and partial bondage. This freedom is not yet complete, pure or full freedom because it is not yet in eternity. For we are still partially weak and thus only partially free. Whatever our sin was previously, it was wiped out in baptism. But because all our iniquity has been blotted out, does that mean there is no weakness left? If there were no weakness left, then that would mean that we should be living here without sin. Yet who would venture to say such a thing except someone who is proud but also unworthy of the Deliverer's mercy? This is the kind of person who wants to be self-deceived and who is destitute of the truth. And so, from the fact that some weakness remains, I venture to say that in whatever measure we serve God, we are free. In whatever measure we serve the law of sin, we are still in bondage. And so too the apostle says what we began to say: "I delight in the law of God after the inward person."[35] Here it is then. Freedom occurs when we delight in the law of God, for freedom gives you joy. As long as you do what is right out of fear, you find no delight in God. Find your delight in him, and you are free. Do not fear punishment; rather, love righteousness. Are you not yet able to love righteousness? Fear even punishment then so that you may attain to the love of righteousness. Tractates on the Gospel of John 41.10.[36]

Only Christ Can Grant True Freedom. Cyril of Alexandria: The power to set free belongs to none other than the one who is the Son by nature—one who is truly free and unconstrained by any bondage. Because he is wisdom and light and power by nature, he makes those who are ignorant wise. He enlightens those in darkness, and he strengthens those who are weak. Therefore, because he is God of God and the genuine and free fruit of the essence that reigns over all, he bestows freedom on whomever he wants to. For no one can become truly free at the hands of one who does not possess freedom by nature.

[30]Gal 5:13. [31]Rom 6:20-22. [32]NPNF 1 7:232-33**. [33]Rom 7:13-15. [34]Gal 5:17. [35]Rom 7:22. [36]NPNF 1 7:233**.

But, when the Son himself wills to free anyone, infusing his own good [into them], they are called free indeed. They receive dignity from the one who possesses authority and not from any of those who have borrowed it from another or those who have been ennobled, as it were, with a grace that was not theirs to begin with. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.5.[37]

Do Not Abuse Your Freedom. Augustine: Do not then abuse your freedom for the purpose of sinning freely. Rather, use it in order not to sin at all. Your will is free only if it is godly. You will be free if you become the servant of righteousness. Tractates on the Gospel of John 41.8.[38]

8:37 *Descendants of Abraham Want to Kill Jesus*

Attaining Divine Kinship. Cyril of Alexandria: Having clearly shown and demonstrated that their boast of being descendants of Abraham is utterly empty and devoid of any good, Jesus says this so that they might seek the nobility that is true and dear to God. . . . But how is it that we who are made of earth and "formed from a piece of clay"[39] can be called relatives of the Lord of all, as Paul says, . . . "God's offspring"?[40] Admittedly, we have been made God's offspring because of the flesh that pertains to the mystery of Christ. But it is possible to understand this reality. By thinking his thoughts and earnestly resolving to live godly lives, we are called children of God who is over all. And when we conform our mind to his will, so far as we are able, we are truly like God and indeed truly God's offspring. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.5.[41]

The Difference Between Bodily Seed and a Child. Origen: It is also possible for one who happens to be the [biological] seed of Abraham by diligence to become his [spiritual] child. And it is possible, by neglect and poor stewardship, for one to cease to be his seed. There was still hope for them, however, to whom the saying was addressed. Jesus knew that they were the seed of Abraham and saw that they had not yet lost the ability to become children of Abraham. Since it was possible for them to become children of Abraham in addition to being his seed, he said, "If you are the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham." But just as some are seed of Abraham, so others are really "seed of Canaan, not of Judah," as Daniel[42] says. . . .

But if, in addition to being seed of Abraham, they had cultivated the seed of Abraham and given it over to greatness and growth, the word of Jesus would have produced great growth in the seed of Abraham. . . . But those who wished to kill the Word and to crush him did not contain his greatness. . . . If any one of us is seed of Abraham and the Word of God does not continue in him still, let him not seek to kill the Word. Let him change from merely being seed of Abraham to becoming a child of Abraham, and he will be able to take in the Word of God, whom he did not have till then. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.32-33, 41, 43, 45.[43]

A Reminder of Their Present Sin. Chrysostom: He removes them by degrees from their relationship to Abraham, teaching them not to pride themselves so much on that relationship. For just as bondage and freedom depend on one's actions, so also does one's relationship to another. Still, he does not directly say, "You are not the seed of Abraham [because] you are murderers of the righteous." Instead he goes along with them for awhile, affirming that they are Abraham's seed. . . . But then, after the witness of his works shuts their mouths, he speaks more boldly: "You seek to kill me." And if anyone says, "What of it? They were only trying to act justly"—this is not the case either. And so he adds the reason they acted the way they did:

[37]LF 43:631-32**. [38]NPNF 1 7:232*. [39]Job 33:6. [40]Acts 17:29. [41]LF 43:632-33**. [42]Sus 56. In the Septuagint, this was part of the book of Daniel. [43]FC 89:212-15**; SC 290:172, 176-78.

"Because my word has no place in you." Homilies on the Gospel of John 54.2.[44]

Like a Hook to a Fish. Augustine: If my word were taken, it would take hold; if you were taken, you would be enclosed like fishes within the nets of faith. What then does it mean that it "takes no hold in you"? It means that it does not take hold of your heart because it is not received by your heart. For this is how the Word of God is and how it ought to be for believers—as a hook to the fish: it takes when it is taken. And it does no injury to those who are caught by it. They are caught for their salvation, not for their destruction. Tractates on the Gospel of John 42.1.[45]

8:38 *My Father and Your Father*

The Truth of the Father. Chrysostom: He does not say, "You do not take in my words" but "My word has no place in you," thus declaring the depths of his doctrines. And yet, this is not a reason to kill him. In fact, they should have honored him and waited on him in order to learn. But they might say, Why should we pay attention to you if you are speaking about yourself? And so he adds, "I speak what I have seen with my Father. . . . As both by my words and by the truth I declare the Father, so also do you by your actions [declare your father]." For I have not only the same substance but also the same truth with the Father. Homilies on the Gospel of John 54.2.[46]

The Lord Saw Himself in the Father. Augustine: But the Lord wishes God the Father to be understood when he says, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father." I have seen the truth; I speak the truth because I am the truth. For if the Lord speaks the truth that he has seen with the Father, he has seen himself—he speaks himself because he himself is the truth of the Father, which he saw with the Father. For he is the Word—the Word that was with God. Tractates on the Gospel of John 42.2.[47]

The Son Is an Eyewitness to the Father. Origen: The Savior is an eyewitness to what was done with the Father. . . . "No one has known the Father except the Son,"[48] since they are no longer eyewitnesses to whom the Son has revealed him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.46.[49]

Their Father Is the Devil. Augustine: As of this moment, he has not yet named their father. A little above he referred to Abraham, but this referred to their lineage, not to their similarity of life. He is about to speak of that other father of theirs who neither begat them nor created them to be people. But they were still that father's children in as far as they were evil, not in as far as they were people. In other words, they were his children because of how they imitated him, not because they were created by him. Tractates on the Gospel of John 42.2.[50]

8:39 *Abraham Is Our Father*

A Humbler Assertion Than Necessary. Origen: They appear to have replied as if they had understood the statement about who their father was in a much lowlier manner than the Lord meant it. For Jesus was referring to God when he declared, "And you, therefore, do the things that you have heard from the Father." They, however, make a humbler assertion about the father of their own nation when they say, "Abraham is our father." Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.57-58.[51]

What Can You Say Against Abraham? Augustine: As if to say: What are you going to say against Abraham? . . . They seem to be inviting him to say something in disparagement of Abraham and so to give them an opportunity of

[44]NPNF 1 14:194-95**. [45]NPNF 1 7:235*. [46]NPNF 1 14:195**. [47]NPNF 1 7:235*. [48]Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22. [49]FC 89:215; SC 290:178. [50]NPNF 1 7:235-36**. [51]FC 89:218*; SC 290:184-86.

executing their purpose. Tractates on the Gospel of John 42.3.[52]

Jesus Refutes Their Claim. Origen: It is clear, however, that the Savior refutes this too as a false statement by his reply, "If you are the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham." Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.60.[53]

He Denies Their Way of Life. Augustine: And yet he said above, "I know that you are Abraham's children." He does not deny their origin, but he does condemn their deeds. Their flesh was from him but not their life. Tractates on the Gospel of John 42.4.[54]

Do *All* the Works of Abraham. Origen: Those who fasten on to one of Abraham's works, such as the statement "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for justice,"[55] think that this is what is referred to in the command, "Do the works of Abraham." Even if it is conceded to them that faith is a work (which would not be conceded by those who accept the saying, "Faith without works is dead,"[56] as authoritative, nor by those who understand that to be justified by faith differs from being justified by works of law), then let them explain why it was not said in the singular, "If you are children of Abraham, do[57] the work of Abraham." Rather, it is said in the plural, "Do the works of Abraham." This is equivalent, I think, to saying, "Do *all* the works of Abraham." Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.66.[58]

8:40 *Seeking to Kill the Truth*

Why Do You Seek to Kill Me? Eusebius of Caesarea: He taught his disciples that he was life and light and truth, and the other conceptions of his divinity. However, to those who were not initiated into the secrets of his nature, he said, "Why do you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth?" Proof of the Gospel 10, Intro 7.[59]

They Ultimately Plot Against God. Origen: Those who seek to kill him seek to kill a man,[60] since even if they should kill him, God is not killed. And if they seek to kill him when they have not yet killed him, they plot against him as against a man, not thinking that the one against whom they plot is God. For no one would continue to plot against him if he were convinced that the one against whom he plots is God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.80.[61]

The "Truth" Is His Equality with the Father. Chrysostom: But what is the "truth" of which he speaks? That he was equal with the Father. For this was what ultimately motivated the Jews to kill him. This is why he adds . . . "which I have heard from my Father," in order to show that this doctrine is not opposed to the Father. Homilies on the Gospel of John 54.2.[62]

Abraham Rejoiced to See My Day. Origen: If Abraham has not done what he could not possibly have done, the words "this Abraham did not do" will seem to have been spoken without purpose. For some would say to this that the statement "this Abraham did not do" is made in vain, since he did not do what by no means [could have] occurred during his time, for Jesus did not exist during his time. But since I assume that the statement "this Abraham did not do" has been made in praise of Abraham, as it were, I would say that, in accordance with the word that teaches, "Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day, and he saw it and was glad,"[63] it is possible that there was also a man in Abraham's time who spoke the truth that he heard from

[52]NPNF 1 7:236**. [53]FC 89:218, SC 290:186. [54]NPNF 1 7:236*. [55]Rom 4:3; Gen 15:6; Jas 2:23. [56]Jas 2:26. The canonicity of the letter of James was still contested by some during Origen's lifetime. [57]RSV translates the verb in the imperfect tense. Origen translates the verb as an imperative: If you are children of Abraham, *do* the works of Abraham. [58]FC 89:219-20; SC 290:188-90. [59]*POG* 2:191. [60]See Tertullian *On the Flesh of Christ* 15 (ANF 3:534), who uses this passage to prove Christ was truly human. [61]FC 89:223; SC 290:198. [62]NPNF 1 14:195*. [63]Jn 8:56.

God, and that Abraham, in truth, did not seek to kill this man. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.87-88.[64]

8:41a *Doing the Works of Their Father*

Our Fruit Shows Whose Children We Are. Origen: In so far as we commit sins, we have not as yet put off the generation of the devil, even if we are thought to believe in Jesus. Consequently Jesus says to those Jews who have believed, "You do the works of your father," "father" meaning the devil because of the statement "You are of your father the devil." Now, if everyone "who commits sin is of the devil,"[65] everyone who is not of the devil does not commit sin. In addition, if "the reason the Son of God appeared was that he might destroy the works of the devil,"[66] to the extent that he has not yet destroyed the works of the devil in us, because we have not presented ourselves to him who destroys the works of the devil, we have not as yet put aside being children of the devil, since it is our fruits that show whose sons we are. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.103-5.[67]

[64]FC 89:225; SC 290:202. [65]1 Jn 3:8. [66]1 Jn 3:8. [67]FC 89:228; SC 290:208-10.

JESUS' FATHER AND THEIR FATHER JOHN 8:41b-47

Overview: When they reply that they were not born of fornication, they have either begun to realize that Jesus is charging them with spiritual fornication by attacking their manner of life (Augustine), or they have chosen to respond to Jesus with a more vindictive retort (Origen), implying that his own birth was in question, having been born of fornication rather than conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (Cyril of Alexandria). They do not deny they have a human father, as Jesus does. As far as their heavenly Father is concerned, however, he is the Father of those who love Jesus and keep his commandments, which they are not doing.

The Son then speaks of how God is his Father. He mentions both his procession and his coming from the Father (Origen). Proceeding from the Father is not the same as to come from the

Father: *proceeding* refers to his eternal procession, while *to come forth* referred to his incarnation (Hilary, Augustine). Jesus emphasizes his being sent by his Father, and in doing so may also be alluding to those who have not been sent by the Father (Origen). These cannot hear the Word because they do not believe (Augustine). Such hearing can only be restored by the Word who heals the deaf (Origen).

Jesus now tells them who their real father is: the devil (Chrysostom, Augustine). We should not think that anyone is created as a son of the devil by nature, since it is also true that one who may have previously been a son of the devil can become a son of God, whose sonship they demonstrate as they lead a life of love. As a father who desires disobedience, the devil desires the opposite of what a true father would expect from his children. Our desires too, as much as our deeds, demonstrate who our father is (Origen).

The devil, as the serpent in the garden, is shown to be a liar and murderer from the beginning (Irenaeus), having murdered the soul (Augustine) and the image of God that had been given to Adam, thus bringing death to the whole human race. As a liar, he even deceives himself (Origen). But no one should think that the devil was made with a sinful nature, as if he had no other choice when he lied and murdered "from the beginning." Rather, our Lord says that "he did not remain in the truth," which means there was at least some point when he was in the truth (Augustine). The devil was a liar from the beginning, and so it is no surprise that those lie who follow him: Ordinary people lie; extraordinary people do not (Origen). The devil not only was the first to generate lies, he also was the first to introduce and use them (Theodore of Mopsuestia).

The fact that Jesus here condemns as unbelievers those whom John had previously said believed must mean that they believed the miracles but not the truth he had to impart. Jesus is asking of the whole human race (Origen): Who of you convicts him of sin? It is the enemies of truth who seek to convict Jesus of sin (Chrysostom). Jesus, in turn, convicts the leaders of the Jews (Cyril of Alexandria). True hearing of the Word implies obedience (Theodore of Heraclea). We are called to hear with the ears of our heart (Gregory the Great).

8:41b *We Were Not Born of Fornication*

Charged with Spiritual Fornication. Augustine: They began somewhat to realize that the Lord was not speaking of carnal generation but of their manner of life. The Scriptures, which they read, often call it in a spiritual sense "fornication," when the soul is, as it were, prostituted by subjection to many false gods. That is why they made this reply. Tractates on the Gospel of John 42.7.[1]

Vindictive Response. Origen: I ask whether those Jews who are said to have believed in him[2] do not respond rather vindictively, because they were reproved as not being children of Abraham, by hinting in a veiled manner that the Savior was born of fornication. They assume this as probable because they do not accept his famous and widely discussed birth from the Virgin. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.128.[3]

Questioning the Virgin Birth. Cyril of Alexandria: The unbelieving Jews were clearly sick with bitter and unholy conceptions of our Savior Christ. They thought that the Holy Virgin had been corrupted—I mean the Lord's mother—and that she gave birth to a child conceived not of the Holy Spirit or of operation from above but rather conceived by one of those on the earth. They were either so entirely without faith and without understanding that they did not take into account the prophetic writings, even though they clearly heard, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son."[4] Or, looking only to the flesh and following the common order of

[1]NPNF 1 7:236**. [2]See Jn 8:31. [3]FC 89:233; SC 290:220. [4]Is 7:14.

events, they did not even consider how divine nature works beyond speech—a nature for which nothing is impossible. They also did not consider that for God all that is good is possible. Rather, they believed that there is no way that a woman could conceive other than by coming together with her husband. Sick with such suspicion, the wretched ones dared to question the birth of the wondrous offspring that had been enabled by the Holy Spirit. Commentary on the Gospel of John 5.5.[5]

Jesus Has No Man as Father. Origen: The Savior said that God was his Father[6] and acknowledged no man as his father. Hence it is likely because of the statement "We have not been born of fornication," that, to give offense, they in turn add, "We have one father, God." It is as if they were saying, "We are the ones who have one Father, God, rather than you, who claim to have been born of a virgin, though you were born of fornication. You boast that you have been born of a virgin by saying that you have God alone as your one Father. We who acknowledge God as our Father do not deny that we also have a human father." Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.130.[7]

8:42 *Love for the Father and the Son*

God Is the Father of Those Who Love Jesus. Origen: If, then, the [conditional] proposition is true, "If God were your father, you would love me," it is clear that the [conditional] contrary to this is also true: If you do not love me, God is not your Father. God is not the Father, therefore, of those who do not love Jesus. And there was a time when Paul did not love Jesus. There was a time, then, when God was not Paul's Father. Paul, therefore, was not a son of God by nature, but later he became a son of God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.137-38.[8]

Keeping Commandments. Origen: Now, at what other time does God become one's father than at the time one keeps his commandments? It is because of these commandments that one who was not formerly a son of the father in heaven becomes his son, when the Father leads the one who becomes his son to regeneration, and is called "Father." Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.140.[9]

The Son Is in the Father. Origen: But when one compares the condition that resulted from having taken up the form of a servant after he had emptied himself[10] with that former condition of the Son, you will understand how the Son has proceeded from God and has come to us, and [how he] has come out, as it were, of the one who sent him, even if, in another manner, the Father has not left him alone but is with him,[11] and is in the Son just as also the Son is in the Father.[12] For unless you understand that the Son is in the Father in a different way than he was before he proceeded from God, it will seem contradictory that he has both proceeded from God and, after he has proceeded from God, is still in God. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.155-56.[13]

To Proceed Is Not the Same as to Come. Hilary of Poitiers: The Son of God here was not condemning the devout confidence of those who combine their confession that he is true God, the Son of God, with their own claim to be God's children. What he is condemning here is the rash presumption of the Jews in claiming God for their Father when they did not love the Son: "If God were your Father, you would surely love me; for I proceeded from God." . . . His proceeding is obviously different from his coming, for the two are mentioned side by side in this passage: "For I proceeded and came from God." In order to elucidate the difference between "I proceeded from God" and "I came," he further explains, "I did not come on my own, but he sent me." These words tell us

[5]LF 43:641-42**. [6]See Jn 5:18. [7]FC 89:233; SC 290:220-22. [8]FC 89:235; SC 290:224-26. [9]FC 89:236; SC 290:226. [10]See Phil 2:7. [11]See Jn 8:29. [12]See Jn 14:10. [13]FC 89:238-39; SC 290:232.

that he is not the source of his own existence. They also tell us that he has proceeded forth a second time from God [in the incarnation] when he was sent by him. But when our Lord says that those who called God their Father ought to love him because he has proceeded from God, there he means that his being born of God was the reason why he should be loved. This *proceeding* carries back our thoughts to the incorporeal birth, for their claim that God was their Father was supposed to be evident in their loving Christ who was begotten from God. For when the Son says, "Whoever hates me hates my Father as well," this *my* is an assertion of his relationship to the Father that no one else has. . . . No one can worship the Father except those who love the Son. For the one and only reason that he gives for loving the Son is his origin from the Father, not by his advent [i.e. his incarnation] but by his birth [i.e., his eternal generation].[14] And love for the Father is only possible for those who believe that the Son is from him. ON THE TRINITY 6.30.[15]

THE SENDING OF CHRIST AND HIS ETERNAL PROCESSION. AUGUSTINE: The sending of Christ is his incarnation. But the proceeding forth of the Word from God is an eternal procession. . . . From him, then the Son proceeded forth as God, the equal, the only Son, the Word of the Father. And he came to us, for the Word was made flesh[16] that he might dwell among us. His coming indicates his humanity. His staying indicates his divinity. It is his Godhead toward which we make progress, and it is by his humanity that we are able to make that progress. TRACTATES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 42.8.[17]

AN ALLUSION TO THOSE NOT SENT BY THE FATHER. ORIGEN: I think these words were spoken because there were some who came without being sent by the Father. Jeremiah teaches of such people who promise some teaching or prophecy, where it is written, "I did not send these prophets, yet they ran."[18] COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 20.160.[19]

8:43 *You Cannot Bear to Hear My Word*

THEY DO NOT BELIEVE. AUGUSTINE. And they could not hear because they refused to believe and amend their lives. TRACTATES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 42.9.[20]

HEARING RESTORED BY THE DIVINE WORD. ORIGEN: First then, we must acquire the ability to hear the divine word so that subsequently we may also be able to know the whole teaching of Jesus. For it is possible that, though one previously could not hear Jesus' word, he attains the ability to hear it, because one cannot hear until his hearing is healed by the Word who says to the deaf, "Be opened." COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 20.163-64.[21]

8:44a *You Are of Your*[22] *Father the Devil*

ANOTHER BLOW TO THEIR PATRIMONY. CHRYSOSTOM: He had already driven them out of their relationship to Abraham. And when they dared greater things, he then adds another blow, telling them not only that they are not Abraham's children but that they are even children of the devil. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 54.3.[23]

THEY KEEP CHANGING FATHERS. AUGUSTINE: How long are you going to keep speaking of a father? How often will you change your fathers—at one time Abraham, at another God? Hear the Son of God tell you whose children you are: "You are of your father the devil."[24] TRACTATES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 42.9.[25]

[14]*Nativitas* here means the eternal generation, as is normally the case with Hilary. [15]NPNF 2 9:109**. [16]Jn 1:14. [17]NPNF 1 7:237**. [18]Jer 23:21. [19]FC 89:239**; SC 290:234. [20]NPNF 1 7:237*. [21]FC 89:240**; SC 290:236. [22]This pronoun, as Ronald Heine points out, is neither in the text of John nor Origen. Origen then sees the text as ambiguous, inferring that either the devil has a father, so that those Jesus is addressing have the devil's father as their father, or that they are of *this* father, who has the title "devil." See FC 89:242-43 with notes. [23]NPNF 1 14:195**. [24]Augustine goes on to warn against any type of Manichaean dualism that would assert a certain family of darkness that is equal to the family of God. [25]NPNF 1 7:237*.

Loving One's Enemies Makes One a Child of God. Origen: These words make it very clear that one is not a child of the devil as a result of creation, nor is anyone said to be a son of God because he was so created. It is also clear that one who was previously a child of the devil can become a child of God. Matthew also reveals this when he records that the Savior spoke as follows: "You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, you shall love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may become children of your Father who is in heaven."[26] For note that by [obeying] the commands, "Love your enemies" and "Pray for those who persecute you," he who previously was not a child of the Father in heaven subsequently becomes his child. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.106-7.[27]

8:44b *Your Father's Desires*

The Devil Desires Disobedience. Origen: For such is the meaning of the words "You will to do your father's desires." But we must say in reference to these matters that the devil desires, let us say, that this boy be corrupted, and that this woman commit adultery and that these men visit prostitutes. By the power of these desires, [the devil] makes the desire to do the things that he wishes to effect serve him so that, according to this, one could say that the one [i.e., the devil] who causes the prostitution or adultery practices prostitution and commits adultery even before the human becomes involved. And you will say the same thing also about every sin, that is to say, the devil does not desire money, but he desires to make people lovers of money and passionately desirous of material things. And those who love money, even if all they do is wish for it, will to carry out this desire of his. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.179-80.[28]

What We Desire Matters. Origen: If we do the works of God and wish to do his desires, we are children of God. But if we do the works of the devil and wish to do what he desires, we are of our father the devil. Let us pay attention, then, not only to what we do but also to what we desire. For even to wish to do the desires of the devil is sufficient to be his child. Perhaps this is why the words "You wish to do the desires of your father" are added after the statement "You do the works of your father," so that we may learn that even if we merely wish to do what the devil desires, we will still be called the children of the devil. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.193-94.[29]

8:44c *A Murderer from the Beginning*

The Serpent in Eden. Irenaeus: For those who tasted of the tree died. And the serpent is proved a liar and a murderer, as the Lord said of him: "For he is a murderer from the beginning, and the truth is not in him." Against Heresies 5.23.2.[30]

Murder of the Soul. Augustine: You are his children because of your desires, not because you are born of him. What are his desires? "He was a murderer from the beginning." This explains why "your will is to do your father's desires." "You seek to kill me, a man who tells you the truth." The devil, too, harbored ill will toward the human race and killed it. For the devil, in his envy of the human race, assumed the guise of a serpent and spoke to the woman, and from the woman he instilled his poison into the man. They died by listening to the devil,[31] who they would not have listened to had they but listened to the Lord. For man [humankind], having his place between [God], who created, and [the devil], who was fallen, should have obeyed the Creator, not the deceiver. Therefore "he was a murderer from the beginning." Look at the kind of murder

[26]Mt 5:43-45. Origen is arguing against Gnostic determinism. [27]FC 89:228-29; SC 290:210-12. [28]FC 89:244; SC 290:246. [29]FC 89:247; SC 290:252-54. [30]ANF 1:552**. [31]See Gen 3:1.

he did. The devil is called a murderer not as armed with a sword or steel. He came to humanity, sowed his evil suggestions and killed him. Do not think then that you are not a murderer when you persuade your brother to evil. If you persuade your brother to evil, you kill him. And to let you know that you kill him, listen to the psalm: "The sons of men [humankind], whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."[32] Tractates on the Gospel of John 42.11.[33]

Killing Our Image of God. Origen: But notice also the statement "In Adam all die, and in Christ all shall be made alive."[34] . . . By observing these words you will perceive the life of man according to the image.[35] And when you have understood what his life is, you will perceive in what manner the murderer killed the living man, and that he will correctly be called a murderer, not because he killed some particular individual but because he killed the whole race insofar as "in Adam all die." Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.224.[36]

The Devil Is Self-Deceived. Origen: And the reason why truth is not in him is that he has been deceived and accepts lies, and he has himself been deceived by himself. On this basis he is considered to be worse than the rest of these who are deceived, since they are deceived by him, but he creates his own deception himself. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.244.[37]

Sin Began in the Devil, and He Was the Beginning of Sin. Augustine: Someone may object that the words of the Lord about the devil [here] . . . are to be understood as if he was not only a murderer from the beginning of the human race when human beings, whom he could kill by his deceit, were made; but also that he did not abide in the truth from the time of his own creation and was accordingly never blessed with the holy angels. Instead he refused to submit to his Creator and proudly exulted as if in a private lordship of his own. In this way he was deceived and deceiving. . . . But they do not notice that the Lord did not say, "The devil was naturally a stranger to the truth" but "The devil did not remain in the truth." By this, he meant us to understand that the devil had fallen from the truth in which, if he had remained, he would have become a partaker and would have remained in blessedness along with the holy angels. . . .

They[38] suppose [according to 1 John 3:8] that the devil was made with a sinful nature, but they misunderstand the passage; for if sin is natural, it is not sin at all. And how do they answer the prophetic proofs—either what Isaiah says when he represents the devil under the person of the king of Babylon, "How you are fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"[39] or what Ezekiel says, "You were in Eden, the garden of God . . ."[40] where it is meant that he was at some point without sin? For a little after, it is still more explicitly said, "You were perfect in your ways."[41] And if these passages cannot be interpreted properly in any other way, then we must understand by this passage also, "He did not remain in the truth," that he was once in the truth but did not remain in it. And from this passage, "The devil has sinned from the beginning," it is not that he sinned from the beginning of his created existence; rather, sin began in him, and he was the beginning of sin. City of God 11.13, 15.[42]

Ordinary People Lie, Extraordinary People Do Not. Origen: If one carefully considers human nature, which is not easily purified of false teachings, one sees that, as "everyone is a liar,"[43] not everyone has stood in the truth. If someone is not a liar and has stood in the truth, he is not an ordinary person but is like those to whom God says, "I have said, 'You are gods, children of the Most High.'"[44]. . . But when the Holy Spirit or an angelic spirit speaks,

[32]Ps 57:4 (56:5 LXX, Vg). [33]NPNF 1 7:238*. [34]1 Cor 15:22. [35]Gen 1:26. [36]FC 89:253; SC 290:268. [37]FC 89:257; SC 290:278. [38]The Manichaeans. [39]Is 14:12. [40]Ezek 28:13. [41]Ezek 28:15. [42]NPNF 1 2:213**. [43]Ps 116:11 (115:2 LXX). [44]Ps 82:6 (81:6 LXX).

it does not speak from its own resources but from the Word of truth itself and from wisdom. This is made clear in the Gospel according to John below where Jesus teaches about the Paraclete, saying, "He will receive from me and will declare it to you."[45] Whenever the lie speaks, however, it speaks from its own resources. . . . We then who are human beings should hurry and flee with all our strength to become "gods" since, to the extent that we are human, we are liars, just as the father of the lie is a liar. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.241-42, 263-64, 266.[46]

The Generator of Lies and the First to Use Lies. Theodore of Mopsuestia: When Satan, he says, speaks lies and similar words, he does not use those of others but his own. He is the father of falsehood because he generated it and was the first to use it by speaking to Adam when he substituted certain words in place of others. The expression "He is a liar and the father of it" signifies that he is a liar and the father of lies. In other words, the devil not only generated lies. He was also the first to introduce them and to use them. Commentary on John 3.8.44.[47]

8:45 *Not Believing the Truth*

What About the Jews Who Believed Him? Origen: We must question how he says, to people who believe in him, "because I speak the truth, you do not believe in me." Consider whether it is possible to believe in someone in one particular aspect but not to believe in another aspect. For instance, one could believe that Jesus was crucified in Judea in the time of Pontius Pilate but not believe that he was born of the Virgin Mary. This one believes and disbelieves in the same person. Take, as another example, those who believe in the Jesus who performed the recorded wonders and signs in Judea but who do not believe in the Son of the one who made heaven and earth. These believe and disbelieve in the same one. . . .

It is likely that they believed in him on the basis of what was seen because of his marvelous deeds, but they did not believe in his deeper sayings. . . . You see this even in the present, that there are many people who marvel at Jesus whenever they consider the story about him but who no longer believe when a teaching that is deeper and greater than their capacity is disclosed to them, but instead suspect it to be false. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.268-70, 274-75.[48]

8:46a *Which of You Convicts Me of Sin?*

The Whole Human Race. Origen: Now, so far as the literal meaning is concerned, the text also involves the Savior's boldness, since no man could say with the confidence that he had not sinned, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" It is only our Lord "who did not sin,"[49] "who has been tempted in all things like as we are, without sin."[50] He is the only one able to address these words to all who have ever known him. Now, I understand the words "which of you" to be said not only to those present but also to the whole human race, as if we were to understand it to mean: Who of your race? Or, what sort of person will be able to convict me of sin? But be assured: there is no one. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.277-78.[51]

Enemies of Truth Offer Conviction. Chrysostom: You want to kill me, then, because you are enemies of the truth. It is not because you have any fault to find in me, for "which of you convicts me of sin?" Homilies on the Gospel of John 54.3.[52]

8:46b *Do You Not Believe Me?*

Jesus Convicts the Leaders of the Peo-

[45]Jn 16:14. [46]FC 89:257, 260-61**; SC 290:276-78, 286. [47]CSCO 4 3:176. [48]FC 89:261-62**; SC 290:288-90. [49]1 Pet 2:22. [50]Heb 4:15. [51]FC 89:263; SC 290:292. [52]NPNF 1 14:195*.

ple. Cyril of Alexandria: We must not think that all the Jews were utterly immersed in ill-tempered foolishness.[53] Rather, some had "a zeal for God," as Paul said, "but it was not yet enlightened,"[54] and these therefore delayed a little regarding the faith. But regarding those who were thus disposed we shall blame the unholy scribes and Pharisees . . . whose boundless unbelief stirred the others to wrath and intemperately kindled them to bloodthirstiness. For the scribes and Pharisees were the leaders and the ones who persuaded their subjects to go along with their sacrilege. It is fitting therefore that they are accused as having "taken away the key of knowledge,"[55] and neither entering themselves, they hinder others. Therefore, when Christ says, "Why do *you* not believe me?" he is primarily speaking against the leaders. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[56]

8:47 *One Who Is of God Hears the Words of God*

Those Who Believe and Obey Are Truly "of God." Theodore of Heraclea: "He who is of God hears the word of God." He says that those who believe are "of God," namely, those who obey his decrees, because they take their example of piety from him and, coming into possession of virtue, they are called children of God. He does not say that they have been born of God as far as their nature is concerned. None of them exist as some portion of his nature, which after all cannot be divided or separated. Only by his own will and good pleasure does he grant them to be of God. He interprets the previous text by what follows, for he says to the unbelieving, "Therefore you did not hear, because you are not of God." Just as he said that the unbelievers were alienated from God not because of their nature—for they too were from him—but because of their choice, so in the same way he also says that those who hear him are of God because of the willingness of their faith and the virtue of their resolution. When he speaks of those who hear him, he does not mean those who hear him merely with the ears that perceive words, but rather those who obey the words that he spoke. Fragments on John 66.[57]

Hear with the Ears of Your Heart. Gregory the Great: Let each one of you then consider within himself if this voice of God prevails in the ears of his heart. Then he will recognize whether he is now of God. There are some who do not choose to hear God's commands even with their bodily ears. There are others who do this but do not embrace them with their heart's desire. There are still others who receive God's words readily, yes, and are touched, even to tears. But afterwards they go back to their sins again and therefore cannot be said to hear the word of God, because they neglect to practice it. Forty Gospel Homilies 16.[58]

[53]A decisive passage for contemporary relevance to Jewish-Christian dialogue. See also comments on 7:40-49. [54]See Rom 10:2. [55]Lk 11:52. [56]LF 43:660**. [57]*JKGK* 82-83. [58]CS 123:114**.

Jesus' Claims of Life and Preexistence John 8:48-59

Overview: Despite the Jewish leaders' accusation, Jesus saves Samaritans and conquers demons (Gregory of Nazianzus). But Christ accepts their title as the good Samaritan as someone who defends the weak (Augustine), since he indeed does everything recorded in the parable in Luke (Origen). Our Lord was also patient with those who accused him, and he calls on us to do the same, bearing with those insults that are directed at us but not with those directed at God (Chrysostom). Jesus tells the Jewish leaders that they deny Christ when they dishonor him; however, his words are also directed to all who dishonor him (Origen). He teaches us how to respond to injury (Gregory the Great), but abusers of the Father's children should also know that they are ultimately responsible to the Father (Chrysostom), who judges by distinguishing the glory of his Son from that of mere human beings (Augustine). God seeks that same glory in each of us (Origen).

Jesus speaks of the importance of preaching, that is, keeping his Word, especially in the face of increasing wickedness and perversity like he faces here (Gregory the Great). He speaks of the promise for those who hear and keep his Word. They are freed even from death, the last great enemy (Origen, Augustine). Since Christ has power over life and death, his enemies can do nothing to him (Chrysostom). Jesus' opponents, however, would rather cling to death than receive his Word (Gregory the Great). They thought that he was speaking contrary to reason when he implied that Abraham was alive because he had kept Jesus' word, but this is because they had in mind only the death of the body, which is common to all, and not the spiritual death of those who do not keep his word. They also misquote Jesus by saying he said that a person will never *taste* death, when he had said will never *see* death (Origen).

They question whether Christ is greater than Abraham, but they could have just as easily asked whether he was greater than God because of where they saw his words were leading (Chrysostom). In their mind, Abraham and the prophets are dead, but Christ knows that Abraham and the prophets both saw him and kept his Word and therefore are alive (Origen). They accuse him of seeking glory for himself since implicit in his statements about Abraham and the prophets is that he can give the gift of immortality. Even though this is true, he is not seeking his own glory, nor would they believe him if he did (Theodore); rather, he defers his glory to his Father, of whom they are ignorant because they do not know his Son and thus do not know God (Augustine). And, while he may have received glory from his Father according to his humanity, that glory was always his according to his divine

nature (Gregory of Nazianzus).

The God of the Old Testament is the Father of Christ (Augustine), which is proven by the fact that Christ not only knows the Father but is intimately acquainted with the entire Trinity (Ammonius). The Son is the one who appeared to Abraham in the Old Testament (Tertullian), whom Abraham recognized in the Spirit when he saw the day of Christ's coming in the future when he and all who trusted in Christ would be saved (Irenaeus). Abraham saw a prefiguration of the entire holy Trinity when he addressed the three persons as one (Gregory the Great). When Jesus said that Abraham looked forward to seeing his day, he meant that Abraham was looking forward to Christ's suffering on the cross (Chrysostom), who, as one of his own seed, would give up his life for the world (Irenaeus). When Abraham sacrificed his son Isaac, he portended the day of Christ's slaughter (Theodore, Cyril) in the lamb that was slain (Ephrem). Not only Isaac and his descendants were preserved that day, but the Gentiles too would be the fulfillment of God's promise made to Abraham (Cyril of Alexandria).

When the Jews exclaim, "You are not yet fifty years old," is it possible that Christ was closer to fifty years of age, since they could have chosen another age with which to compare him (Irenaeus)? Age, however, is not the question for one who is divine (Gregory the Great), which is what his opposition understood he was claiming to be when he made himself equal to the Father. This is why they took up stones to throw at him (Chrysostom). Jesus, however, walks through them as though they were blind, which indeed they were, although they did not know it (Theodore).

8:48 *A Samaritan Possessed by a Demon*

Jesus Saves Samaritans and Conquers Demons. Gregory of Nazianzus: He is called a Samaritan and a demoniac, but he saves him that came down from Jerusalem and fell among thieves.[1] The demons acknowledge him, and yet he drives them out and runs legions of foul spirits into the sea[2] and sees the prince of the demons falling like lightning.[3] On the Son, Theological Oration 3(29).20.[4]

Christ the Guardian of the Weak. Augustine: In this Samaritan the Lord Jesus Christ wanted us to understand himself. "Samaritan," you see, means "guardian." . . . He could have answered, "I am not a Samaritan, and I do not have a devil." What he did answer was, "It is not I who have a devil." What he answered, he refuted; what he kept quiet about, he confirmed. He denied he had a devil, knowing himself to be the expeller of devils; he did not deny that he was the guardian of the weak. Sermon 171.2.[5]

Jesus Fulfills All the Actions of the Parable in Luke. Origen: The parable in the Gospel of Luke is about a man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. The priest and the Levite passed by him, but the Samaritan came on him on his journey, saw him, had compassion, approached him and bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them.[6] Now, if someone is able to prove that what is said about the Samaritan who healed this man who was half-dead and who had fallen among thieves refers to one other than the Savior, he will also show why the Savior did not deny that he was a Samaritan. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.317-18.[7]

8:49 *I Honor My Father, and You Dishonor Me*

Bear Insults When Directed at Yourself, but Not at God. Chrysostom: Where there was need to instruct them, to pull down their excessive insolence, to teach them not to be proud because of Abraham—at these times he was vehement. But when it was necessary that he should

[1]Lk 10:30. [2]Lk 8:28-33. [3]Lk 10:18. [4]NPNF 2 7:309*. [5]*WSA* 3 5:248. [6]Lk 10:30-34. [7]FC 89:271-72*, SC 290:312.

bear insults he was extremely gentle. . . . And so he teaches us to avenge insults offered to God but to overlook those that are directed at ourselves. Homilies on the Gospel of John 55.1.[8]

Unjust and Sinful Actions Dishonor Christ. Origen: The statement "And you dishonor me" follows these words and is addressed to those who have dishonored him and said to him, "Are we not correct in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" They thought that their incorrect statement was correct. For they denounced the Savior because they thought incorrectly that he was a Samaritan and had a demon. But we must think that the statement "And you dishonor me" was made not only to those at that time but also to those who always dishonor him by what they do contrary to the upright word of God. It was made by those who dishonor Christ, who is justice, by the unjust things they do. . . . "You dishonor me" would also be said to anyone who despises wisdom, since Christ also is wisdom.[9] Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.343-45.[10]

8:50 *Seeking the Glory of Christ*

How to Respond to Injury. Gregory the Great: He provides us with an example of what we should do in such a situation when he adds, "I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks and judges." We know that it is written that "the Father has given all judgment to the Son,"[11] and yet we see that when the Son receives insulting words he does not seek his own glory. He leaves the offenses offered him for the Father's judgment. And so he suggests to us how patient we should be when even he, the Judge, does not wish to avenge himself. Forty Gospel Homilies 16.[12]

Abusers Accountable to the Father. Chrysostom: I have said these things to you, he says, to show that you murderers should not be allowed to call God your Father. And so, I have spoken these words to honor the Father, and it is for his sake that I bear these reproaches and that you dishonor me. And yet, I am not concerned about your abuse, for you are accountable to him. Homilies on the Gospel of John 55.1.[13]

The Father Discerns Between Christ's Glory and Ours. Augustine: He means here, of course, the Father. But how is it then that he says in another place, "The Father judges no one but has committed all judgment to the Son"?[14] . . . In the former place judgment is used in the sense of inflicting pain, but here it is used in the sense of discernment . . . When he says there is "one who seeks and judges," he is referring to the Father, who discerns and distinguishes between my glory and yours. For you glory in the spirit of this present world. I do not. . . . The Father distinguishes the glory of the Son from that of mere human beings. . . . For just because Christ has been made man does not bring us into a comparison with him. We have sin; he was without sin. . . . So then, brothers, in respect, I say, to his very form of a servant . . . the difference is great between the glory of Christ and the glory of other people. It is of that glory he spoke when the devil-possessed heard him say, "I seek not my own glory; there is one who seeks and judges." Tractates on the Gospel of John 43.4, 9.[15]

God Seeks the Glory of Christ. Origen: God, who gave his own Son for us, seeks the glory of Christ in each of those who have received him. He will find it in those who attend to themselves and work out the opportunities for virtue that have been implanted in them, but he will not find it in those who are not such. When he does not find it, he will judge those in whom he does not find the glory of his own Son and will say to them, "Because of you my name is continually blasphemed among the nations."[16] Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.350.[17]

---

[8]NPNF 1 14:197**. [9]See 1 Cor 1:24. [10]FC 89:277; SC 290:324-26. [11]Jn 5:22. [12]CS 123:115*. [13]NPNF 1 14:197**. [14]Jn 5:22. [15]NPNF 1 7:240-42**. [16]Is 52:5. [17]FC 89:278; SC 290:328.

8:51 *Those Who Keep His Word Will Not See Death*

Keeping His Word. Gregory the Great: But when the perversity of the wicked increases, not only should we not cease to preach but we should even intensify our efforts. The Lord counsels us to do this by his example. After he was said to have a demon, he extended the benefits of his preaching when he said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will not see death forever." Forty Gospel Homilies 16.[18]

Death, the Last Enemy. Origen: For what is that death that has come into the world through sin if it is not the last enemy of Christ that will be destroyed? And what is that death that passed to all people because all have sinned if it is not this very death that also reigned from Adam to Moses? Now Moses, that is, the law, continued until the sojourn of our Lord Jesus and ruled by one man's transgression through that one man, until those who have received the abundance of grace and righteousness should reign in life through the one Christ Jesus.[19] Whoever, then, has kept the word of the Only Begotten and Firstborn of creation[20] will never see this death, since it is the nature of the Word to prevent death from being seen. And this is how we must understand the words "If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." It is as if he who speaks these words had given those who hear them light as a gift and said, If anyone keeps this light of mine, he will never see darkness. Commentary on the Gospel of John 20.365-68.[21]

Freed from Eternal Death. Augustine: "See" and "taste" here are used in the sense of what is really the case, that is, what someone will know by experience. And since Jesus was about to die himself, this is how he spoke with those about to die.[22] . . . But what does this mean, "If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death"? It means nothing less than he saw another death from which he came to free us—the second death, eternal death, the death of hell, the death of the damned, which is shared with the devil and his angels! *This* is real death; the other kind of death is only a passage.[23] Tractates on the Gospel of John 43.10-11.[24]

They Can Do Nothing to Christ. Chrysostom: Here he speaks not only of faith but also of a pure life. Above he said "shall have everlasting life," but here he says "shall not see death."[25] At the same time he intimates that they could do nothing against him, for if the one who keeps his word does not die, much less is it possible that he himself should die. At least this is how they understood what he said. Homilies on the Gospel of John 55.1.[26]

8:52 *Now We Know That You Have a Demon*

His Opposition Would Rather Cling to Death. Gregory the Great: Just as it is inevitable that the good become better as a result of offenses, so the condemned always become worse after receiving a kindness. After they had received his preaching, they repeated, "Now we know that you have a demon." They had clung to eternal death without realizing that this was the death to which they were clinging. Forty Gospel Homilies 16.[27]

Contrary to Reason. Origen: The majority, even of the wise, think that every kind of sin, of which one form is also the sin against reason, has no other source than mistaken judgments. But those who have believed in the holy Scriptures as divine think that the things people do contrary to right reason are not accomplished apart from demons or some such hostile powers. The Jews, too, therefore, assumed that it was the result of

[18]CS 123:116. [19]Rom 5:17. [20]Col 1:15. [21]FC 89:281; SC 290:334-36. See also Novatian *On the Trinity* 15 (ANF 5:624). [22]Augustine cites Ps 68:20 (67:21 LXX, Vg) as proof that the Lord would taste death but also escape it. [23]Or "removal." [24]NPNF 1 7:242**. [25]See Jn 6:40. [26]NPNF 1 14:197**. [27]CS 123:116.

the activity of a demon that Jesus said, "Truly, truly I say to you, if anyone shall keep my word, he will not see death forever." And they had this impression because they had neither kept the word nor perceived the meaning of what was said. For here he was speaking of the death of those who are at enmity with the Word [or reason] who die forever because they do not keep his word. But they think he is talking about that death which is common to all, and so when he says that everyone who has kept his word will not die forever, [they think that he] has lost his wits, since Abraham and the prophets died. COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 20.378-80.[28]

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TASTING AND SEEING DEATH. ORIGEN: There is a difference between tasting death and seeing death. The Jews, as unintelligent hearers, confused the saying of the Lord and instead of "he will not *see* death" said "He will not *taste* death." COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 20.413.[29]

8:53 *Greater Than Abraham and the Prophets?*

INFERIOR TO ABRAHAM. CHRYSOSTOM: Again, they have recourse to the empty argument of their descent. They could have just as easily have said, "Are you greater than God?" or "Are those who have heard you greater than Abraham?" But they do not say this, because they thought he was inferior even to Abraham. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 55.1.[30]

ABRAHAM AND THE PROPHETS WERE ALIVE. ORIGEN: They reflected on the death of Abraham and the prophets. . . . They had not, however, comprehended the life of Abraham and the prophets or that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was not their God as men who were dead but as men who were alive.[31] . . . Therefore, although Abraham died, nevertheless he was alive[32] and no longer saw death since he had seen the day of Jesus and rejoiced and was glad. . . .

This is why our Savior said that "Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day, and he saw it and was glad"—to teach that Abraham was alive. But if someone prefers that the words about Abraham do not have this meaning, let him tell us whether he who once saw the day of our Savior . . . can see death after such a sight . . . or that one who was worthy of such a sight was later deprived of what he had seen.

Each of these assertions is absurd. For when Abraham saw the day of Jesus, at the same time he saw it he also heard his word and kept it; therefore he no longer sees death.[33] And so, the Jews were also incorrect when they said, "Abraham died," as if he were still among the dead. . . . The same is also true of the prophets. . . . They too kept the word of the Son of God when the word of the Lord came to Hosea, or Jeremiah or Isaiah; for no other Word of God came to any of these than he who was in the beginning with God, his Son, God the Word.[34] Now if anyone has kept this word, the prophets certainly have. . . . Therefore, just as the Jews' statement "Now we know that you have a demon" is false, so also is their statement "Abraham is dead, and the prophets." COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 20.393-400.[35]

CHRIST'S GIFT OF IMMORTALITY. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA: Abraham and the prophets died, yet you say that you will make those who believe in you immortal. So, it would seem that you [Jesus] are exalting yourself over them. COMMENTARY ON JOHN 3.8.53.[36]

8:54 *The Father Glorifies the Son*

[28]FC 89:283; SC 290:340. [29]FC 89:289*, SC 290:354. Previous to this, Origen has an extended discussion on the difference between what he calls the lower, bodily sense of "tasting" and the higher, spiritual sense of "seeing." Even as he highly spiritualizes the text in that discussion, he is also quite accurate in his observation here that the Jews misquote Jesus. [30]NPNF 1 14:198**. [31]Mt 22:32. [32]See Rom 14:9. [33]Jn 8:51 and *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 20.363-77. [34]See Hos 1:1; Jer 14:1; Is 2:1; Jn 1:1. [35]FC 89:286-87*; SC 290:346-50. [36]CSCO 4 3:179.

The Father's and the Son's Testimony Agrees. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Since they were openly rebuking him for exalting himself over Abraham and the prophets and since they accuse him by saying, "Who do you make yourself out to be?"—he in effect responds by saying: . . . If I spoke about my glory and the things that belong to me, you would not believe me—and with good reason, because I would be testifying about myself. But it is my Father who revealed my glory by testifying about me, as he said above, "The Father who sent me testifies on my behalf."[37] You then say you belong to God, but you do not know him; you are not even familiar with him because you do not obey his words. "I do know him," and what I do matches perfectly with his testimony about me. Even if I say something pleasing about myself, I say nothing contrary to the previous testimony of the Father about me. This is what he means when he says, "And I keep his word. If I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you." Commentary on John 3.8.54-55.[38]

He Refers His Glory to the Father. Augustine: He said this because they said, "Who do you make yourself out to be?" For he refers his glory to the Father. . . . It is my Father that glorifies me, who you say is your God: and you have not known him." See, my brothers, how he shows that God himself is the Father of the Christ who was announced also to the Jews. . . . Christ the Lord called him his Father whom they called their God and did not know. For had they known [God] himself they would have received his Son. Tractates on the Gospel of John 43.14-15.[39]

The Glory Was Always His. Gregory of Nazianzus: Let it be alleged that it is said of him that he receives glory. . . . This all belongs to his humanity; and yet if you were to ascribe it to the Godhead, it would be no absurdity either. For you would not ascribe it as if it were newly acquired but as belonging to him from the beginning by reason of nature, and not as a gift. On the Son, Theological Oration 4(30).9.[40]

8:55 *Knowing the Father and Keeping His Word*

The God of the Old Testament Is Father of Christ. Augustine: Some heretics say that the God proclaimed in the Old Testament is not the Father of Christ but a kind of prince of evil angels.[41] . . . [Jesus] contradicts the heretics when he calls him his Father whom the Jews called their God but did not know. For had they known him, they would have received his Son. However, he adds about himself, "But I know him." And here too, if people simply judge by outward appearances he might appear arrogant. . . . But do not guard against arrogance so much so that the truth gets left behind. Tractates on the Gospel of John 43.15.[42]

The Son Even Knows the Trinity. Ammonius: For the Son not only knows the Father fully and by nature but indeed even knows the Trinity.[43] Fragments on John 309.[44]

8:56 *Abraham Rejoiced to See My Day*

The Son Appeared to Abraham. Tertullian: [Jesus] certainly proves [here] that it was not the Father that appeared to Abraham but the Son. Against Praxeas 22.[45]

Abraham Recognized Christ. Irenaeus: Christ himself . . . together with the Father is the God of the living who spoke to Moses and who was also manifested to the patriarchs. In teaching this very thing he said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad." What did he intend when he said this? "Abraham believed God, and it was

[37]Jn 8:18. [38]CSCO 4 3:179-80. [39]NPNF 1 7:243**. [40]NPNF 2 7:312**. [41]He cites the Manichaeans and Marcionites, among others. [42]NPNF 1 7:243-44**. [43]Gk *trias*. [44]*JKGK* 274. [45]ANF 3:618.

imputed unto him for righteousness."[46] In the first place, [Abraham believed] that he was the maker of heaven and earth, the only God. Second, he believed that God would make his seed as the stars of heaven. This is what is meant by Paul, [when he says], "as lights in the world."[47] Righteously, therefore, having left his earthly family, he followed the Word of God walking as a pilgrim with the Word so that he might [afterwards] make his home with the Word. Against Heresies 4.5.2-3.[48]

Abraham Saw the Lord's Coming in the Spirit. Irenaeus: Abraham was a prophet and saw in the Spirit the day of the Lord's coming and the dispensation of his suffering through whom both he himself and all who trust in God would be saved, following the example of his faith. Since he saw this, he rejoiced exceedingly. The Lord, therefore, was not unknown to Abraham whose day he desired to see. The Lord's Father also was not unknown. For Abraham had learned from the Word of the Lord and believed him. Therefore it was accounted to him by the Lord for righteousness. Against Heresies 4.5.5.[49]

Abraham Saw the Trinity. Gregory the Great: Abraham saw the day of the Lord when he hospitably received three angels as a prefiguration of the most holy Trinity.[50] After he had received them, he spoke to the three as to one, since although there are three persons in the Trinity, the nature of the divinity is one. But the unspiritual minds of [Jesus'] hearers did not raise their eyes from his body. Although he was God, they took account only of his age in the flesh. Forty Gospel Homilies 16.[51]

The Day of the Lord Is the Cross. Chrysostom: "He saw my day and was glad." Jesus shows that he willingly came to his passion since he praises [Abraham], who was gladdened at the cross. For this was the salvation of the world. Homilies on the Gospel of John 55.2.[52]

Christ Was One of Abraham's Descendants. Irenaeus: Abraham also, knowing the Father through the Word who made heaven and earth, confessed that he was God. Having learned by an announcement [made to him] that the Son of God would be a man among men—by whose advent his seed should be as the stars of heaven—he desired to see that day so that he might himself also embrace Christ. Seeing it through the spirit of prophecy, he rejoiced. Against Heresies 4.7.1.[53]

The Sacrifice of Isaac Portends Christ's Sacrifice. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Therefore, he says, after my Father's testimony about me has been explained, now listen to what is in conformity with that [testimony] about me: I am certainly enough of Abraham's superior that he also wished and hoped to see the time when I would reform the world through my passion. And in his desire he saw this, as much as he was allowed to, and clearly rejoiced when, by sacrificing his own son, he revealed his will and received from God the revelation so that he might know what would happen. As he accepted giving his son as a victim for God, so also God would give his Only Begotten for the salvation of the world. Commentary on John 3.8.56.[54]

Abraham Saw the Day of the Lord's Slaughter in Isaac. Cyril of Alexandria: Or, we shall truly grant that he saw the day of the Lord's slaughter . . . when, as a type of Christ, he was enjoined to offer up for a sacrifice his only begotten and firstborn, Isaac. For [Abraham] was similarly executing the priest's office at that time, making clear the exact force of the Mystery in a type in what happened. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[55]

Abraham Saw Christ in the Lamb. Ephrem

[46]Rom 4:3. [47]Phil 2:15. [48]ANF 1:467. [49]ANF 1:467. [50]Gen 18:1-3. [51]CS 123:116. [52]NPNF 1 14:199*. [53]ANF 1:469. [54]CSCO 4 3:180. [55]LF 43:679**. See also Ammonius *Fragment on John* 311 (*JKGK* 275).

the Syrian: "Abraham was hoping to see my day." He is the one about whom it was said, "The nations will be blessed by your seed."[56] "He indeed saw and rejoiced," because he saw in the symbol of the lamb the salvation of all the nations.[57] "You are not fifty years old, but Abraham saw you?" He said to them, "Before Abraham was, I am," because he existed but he was concealed when Isaac was redeemed; his sign was seen in the lamb. When, moreover, there descended into Egypt the seed of the one who was saved by a lamb, and they were there for quite some time—this was shown beforehand in a type by Isaac—they were also delivered by a type, by a lamb.[58] And from that time onwards they would sacrifice a lamb until the time that the true lamb came. When he drew near to John, he [John] announced him by saying, "See, the Lamb of God!"[59] And when the true lamb had come, these others, which were types, ceased. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 16.27.[60]

The Gentiles Are Fulfillment of God's Promise to Abraham. Cyril of Alexandria: Abraham saw three men at the oak in Mamre[61] and received the promise from God that he would be a father of many nations. The only way this could be fulfilled would be for the Gentiles to be called to faith in Christ, inscribing Abraham as their father and sitting down with him in the kingdom of heaven[62] and sharing with him in all good things through the generosity of our Savior. Therefore, Christ says, "Blessed Abraham saw, and seeing, he rejoiced at my day." Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[63]

8:57 *Not Yet Fifty Years Old*

Was Christ Fifty Years Old? Irenaeus: They answered him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Now, such language is fittingly applied to one who has already passed the age of forty without having as yet reached his fiftieth year, although not far from it. But to one who is only thirty years old it would unquestionably be said, "You are not yet forty years old." For those who wanted to convict him of lying would certainly not extend the number of his years far beyond the age that they saw he had attained. Rather, they would mention a period closer to his real age—whether they had truly ascertained this out of the entry in the public register or simply made a conjecture from what they observed, that is, that he was above forty years old and that he certainly was not only thirty years of age. For it is altogether unreasonable to suppose that they were mistaken by twenty years when they wanted to prove that he was too young to exist at the time of Abraham. For what they saw they also expressed. And the person they saw was not a mere phantasm but an actual being[64] of flesh and blood. He did not then look much less than fifty years old, and because of this they said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?"[65] Against Heresies 2.22.6.[66]

8:58 *Before Abraham Was, I Am*

Divinity Has No Past or Future. Gregory the Great: Our Redeemer graciously turns their gaze away from his body and draws it to contemplation of his divinity. He says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." "Before" indicates past time, "I am" present time. Because divinity does not have past and future time but always is, he did not say, "I was before Abraham" but "Before Abraham was, I am." And so it was said to Moses, "I am who I am," and "You will say to the children of Israel, 'He who is has sent me to you.'"[67] Therefore he who could

[56]Gen 22:18. [57]See Gen 22:13. [58]See Ex 12. [59]Jn 1:29, 36. [60]CB709:186. [61]Gen 18:1. Cyril, along with the rest of patristic thought, understood these three to be the Trinity. See *Genesis 12-50*, ACCS OT 2:61-63. [62]Mt 8:11. [63]LF 43:679-80**. [64]*Sed veritas*—literally, "but the truth." [65]Irenaeus is alone in this interpretation, although Chrysostom reflects a narrow textual tradition that Christ was nearly forty when these words were spoken (see *Homily* 55.2; NPNF 1 14:198-99). Irenaeus's argument is largely shaped by his opposition to the Gnostic idea that there were thirty aeons corresponding to the thirty years of Christ's life. [66]ANF 1:392. [67]Ex 3:14.

draw near by manifesting his presence and depart after completing his life existed both before and after Abraham. Truth always exists, because nothing begins before it in time or comes to an end after it. Forty Gospel Homilies 16.[68]

8:59 *They Took Up Stones to Throw*

Would They Ever Stop Throwing Stones? Chrysostom: They were so ready for murder that they threw stones at him. And they did this on their own without asking anyone. But why didn't Jesus say, "Before Abraham was, I was," instead of "I am"? In other words, he uses the same expression, "I am," that his Father does, because it signifies continuous being irrespective of all time. This is why the expression seemed so blasphemous to them. Now, if they could not bear the comparison with Abraham (although this was only a minor comparison), just imagine if he had continually made [statements about making] himself equal to the Father. Would they have ever stopped throwing stones at him? Homilies on the Gospel of John 55.2.[69]

From Blind to Blind. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He passed through them and left the place as if their eyes were closed by divine power so that they might not know how he had left from their midst. . . . Clearly, then, he slipped away from the Jews and, moving on, he performed the work on the blind man. Right after his discourse, then, one miracle was followed by another. This is so since, on the one hand, he was not seen by those who could see (because they were possessed by blindness) while on the other, he gave sight to the one who did not have the natural ability to see. Commentary on John 3.8.57-59.[70]

[68]CS 123:116-17**. [69]NPNF 1 14:199*. [70]CSCO 4 3:180-81.

HEALING A MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH: THE SIXTH SIGN JOHN 9:1-12

Overview: As Jesus did not ignore the man born blind, neither should we (Ambrose). It was he who sought the man out, not the other way around (Chrysostom), seeking to restore what nature had left defective (Caesarius). The disciples want to know the reason for the man's blindness (Chrysostom), knowing that he could not have sinned before birth and that sometimes children may suffer in order to bring grief to the parents (Apollinaris). They assume there must be a reason for his suffering (Theodore of Mopsuestia). Sin, however, was not the reason for his blindness (Augustine), nor had he or his parents done anything wrong (Chrysostom). There are many reasons for trials and maladies (Gregory the Great). This text begs the question: What, then, is the cause of suffering (Cyril of Alexandria) since nothing happens without a purpose (Theodore of Mopsuestia)?

Christ reveals that he and the Father are going about the same work, which is urgent work because, beyond life, there is no more opportunity for work, faith or repentance (Chrysostom). We should avoid speculation and instead use the time God has given us to fulfill his commands (Cyril of Alexandria) since after the resurrection the night will come for unbelievers (Augustine). Jesus calls himself light because he enlightens souls but also because he was about to open the blind man's eyes (Theodore of Heraclea) through dust, just as he had done at the beginning of creation (Ephrem). The light remains in the world as long as Christ's presence remains in the world (Augustine). The brightness of Christ overwhelms the darkness (Chrysostom).

In healing the man born blind, Jesus completes his work as creator (Irenaeus), using the same clay he used at creation to perform further creative work in restoring sight (Origen, Ammonius). Law with grace is like clay without saliva: no healing can be accomplished (Caesarius). Jesus uses saliva instead of water so that everyone would know that the healing came from him and not from the fountain, but he also commanded the man to wash so that no one might think that the earth he mixed with the saliva did the healing either (Chrysostom). The actual healing takes place in Jesus' absence quite a distance away, at the pool of Siloam, allowing many to be witnesses to the miracle (Origen). We too can come to Siloam, which is a type of the washing of regeneration (Irenaeus), as we receive healing through the waters of baptism (Ambrose), although it is the Lord's word and command connected with the water that does the healing (Ephrem). Having washed, the man encounters grace (Theodore of Mopsuestia), which only beggars can do (Chrysostom).

As part of the healing, the man walks the long walk to the pool with the mud on his eyes, ensuring that the people would see what had to have been quite a spectacle (Chrysostom). The blind man is leading the blind (Ephrem) since he still does not know who Jesus is (Cyril of Alexandria) but recounts as much as he knows, describing the miracle as only a blind man would (Chrysostom). He becomes a blind evangelist to the blind (Augustine). When they ask the blind man where Jesus is, he can truthfully say he does not know since he could not see Jesus when he was healed (Theodore of Mopsuestia). Those blind eyes that Jesus had opened with his saliva would later testify against the blindness that spit in his face (Ephrem).

9:1 *A Man Blind from Birth*

The Significance of Blindness from Birth. Ambrose: You have heard that story in the Gospel where we are told that the Lord Jesus, as he was passing by, caught sight of a man who had been blind from birth. Since the Lord did not overlook him, neither ought we to overlook this story of a man whom the Lord considered worthy of his attention. In particular we should notice the fact that he had been blind from birth. This is an important point.

There is, indeed, a kind of blindness, usually brought on by serious illness, which obscures

one's vision but that can be cured, given time; and there is another sort of blindness, caused by cataract, that can be remedied by a surgeon: he can remove the cause, and so the blindness is dispelled. Draw your own conclusion: this man, who was actually born blind, was not cured by surgical skill but by the power of God. Letter 67.1-2.[1]

Jesus Sees the Blind Man. Chrysostom: It is clear that, on going out of the temple, he proceeded intentionally to do the work [of the miracle] from the fact that it was he who saw the blind man, not the blind man who came to him. And so intently did Jesus look at him that even his disciples perceived it. Homilies on the Gospel of John 56.1.[2]

Restoring What Nature Left Defective. Caesarius of Arles: We have just heard that Jesus gave sight to the man who was blind from birth. Do you wonder? Jesus is the Savior. He did something in keeping with his name, for by his kindness he restored what he had given to a lesser degree in the womb. Now when he made his eyes less powerful, surely he did not make a mistake, but he deferred it for the miracle. . . . Behold, why Christ delayed when he made the eyes less powerful in the womb. Do not think that the parents of that blind man had no sin and that the blind man himself, when he was born, did not contract original sin; because of the fact of original sin even very little children are baptized. However, that blindness was not due to the sin of his parents or due to the sin of the blind man, but in order that the glory of God might be made manifest in him. For when we are born we all contract original sin,[3] and still we are not born physically blind. That blind man was prepared as a salve for the human race. He was bodily restored to light, in order that by considering his miracle we might be enlightened in heart. Sermon 172.1.[4]

9:2 *Who Sinned?*

Why the Disciples Ask. Chrysostom: They were led to ask this question because our Lord had said above, when he healed the paralytic, "See, you are well! Sin no more." Thinking from this that the man had been paralyzed because of his sins, they say, "That other person was paralyzed because of his sins, but what would you say about this man? Had he sinned? How can you say that, since he was blind from birth? Have his parents sinned? Neither can one say this because the child does not suffer punishment because of his parents." The same way we ask how it can be when we see a child suffering, this is how the disciples spoke here, not so much asking for information as being perplexed. Homilies on the Gospel of John 56.1.[5]

Suffering As an Exercise. Apollinaris of Laodicea: There was a certain philosophy among the ancients that troubles came from sin because they were confident that God was not responsible for any evil. The notion that people suffer as an exercise so that they might perceive the power of God at last—this was not well known at all because they would rather have God give good rewards to the just then and there and not prolong suffering any longer for the sake of eternal life. Since he was a blind man from birth, it occurred to the disciples to ask. Since no one can sin before his birth, they ventured a guess that the parents were to blame. For they knew that children may suffer in order to bring grief to the parents. But the Lord said that the blindness did not occur because of any sin but for the sake of the glory of God that was about to take place as the power of God would be revealed through his unexpected recovery of sight. Fragments on John 49.[6]

There Must Be a Reason. Theodore of

[1]CSEL 82 2:165. [2]NPNF 1 14:200**. [3]Augustine sees the blind man as a type of the human race, which is blind from birth due to original sin. See *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 44.1 (NPNF 1 7:245). [4]FC 47:424-25*. See also Athanasius *On the Incarnation* 18. [5]NPNF 1 14:200*. [6]*JKGK* 21.

Mopsuestia: It was not unusual for his disciples to ask this kind of question about all that was happening to the Lord so that they could learn those things that lead to godliness. Indeed, since they had left everything and had given themselves completely to the Lord in order to learn from him godliness and piety, it is with laudable care that they took the opportunity from what happened around them to ask him such questions. When they saw this man born blind who, before he could sin, had this damage, and to whom this defect of the eyes happened when he was still in the womb, they were upset in their human way about this fact in trying to relate it to their faith. They thought that there was a just reason for such an accident and that such adversity had occurred not without good cause because they knew that God rules all human things. They were not able to understand what had happened in any other way because of their human weakness, attributing the reason for what happened either to the sin of the parents or to the blind man himself. It was not that he had been injured because he had sinned already—indeed, how could he sin if he was not born yet? But, since he would commit future sins, God, in his foreknowledge, restrained him by that disability. They justly and piously thought that the sins of people were the cause of all evils. But since, because of their human weakness, they could understand nothing more by themselves, they thought that the cause for this disability could only be attributed to the blind man himself or to his parents; as if the son had received that punishment for their sins, or he was the cause of his misfortune because he had received that punishment for his future sins. Commentary on John 4.9.1-2.[7]

9:3 *Neither This Man Nor His Parents Sinned*

He Never Sinned? Augustine: Was he then born without original sin, or had he committed no sin in the course of his lifetime? . . . Both this man and his parents had sinned . . . but that sin itself was not the reason why he was born blind. . . . Our Lord gives the reason why . . . "That the works of God should be made known in him." Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.3.[8]

Does He Suffer for the Glory of God? Chrysostom: Here again is another difficulty if [it is true that] it was not possible that the glory of God should be shown without this man's punishment. Certainly it was not impossible, for it was possible. But it happened so "that [God's glory] might be made evident even in this man." One might ask, however, Did he suffer wrong for the glory of God? Tell me what he did wrong. For what if God had never willed to make him at all? But I assert that he even received benefit from his blindness. Because he recovered the sight of the eyes within. What were the Jews profited by their eyes? They incurred the heavier punishment, being blinded even while they saw. And what injury did this man have because of his blindness? For through his blindness he recovered his sight. As, then, the evils of the present life are not evils, so neither are the good things good. Sin alone is an evil, but blindness is not an evil. And he who had brought this man from not being into being also had power to leave him as he was. Homilies on the Gospel of John 56.1.[9]

Various Reasons for Trials. Gregory the Great: One blow falls on the sinner for punishment only, not conversion. Another occurs for correction; still another happens not in order to correct past sins but for the prevention of future sins. Another blow happens neither for correcting past nor preventing future sins. Rather, the unexpected deliverance following the blow serves to excite a love more focused on the Savior's goodness. Morals on the Book of Job, Preface 5.12.[10]

What Is the Cause of Suffering? Cyril of

[7]CSCO 4 3:181-82. [8]NPNF 1 7:246**. [9]NPNF 1 14:201**. [10]LF 18:23-24**.

Alexandria: We do not believe that the soul previously existed; nor indeed can we think that it sinned before the body, for how can someone sin who has not yet been born? But if there has been no sin or fault preceding the suffering, what then shall we allege as the cause of the suffering? Truly, by our minds we cannot comprehend those things that are far above us. And, I should advise the prudent and myself above all to abstain from wishing to thoroughly scrutinize them. For we should recall to mind what we have been commanded[11] and not curiously examine things that are too deep, or pry into those that are too hard or rashly attempt to discover those things that are hidden in the divine and ineffable counsel alone. Rather, concerning such matters we should piously acknowledge that there are certain wondrous things that God alone understands. At the same time we should maintain and believe that since God is the fountain of all righteousness, God will neither do nor determine anything whatsoever in human affairs or in those of the rest of creation that is unbecoming to God or differs at all from the true righteousness of justice. Since therefore it is fitting for us to be affected in this way, I say, that the Lord does not speak dogmatically when he says "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Rather, he says it to redirect the questioner in another direction and to lead us from things too deep for us to more suitable ones. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[12]

Nothing Happens Without a Purpose. Theodore of Mopsuestia: The Lord taught the disciples that there are many reasons for all these events and that they are certainly secret and unexplainable. And so, we always complain about events whose causes we ignore, but then we also learn that nothing happens in vain. This knowledge will be given to us in the future world, because what is hidden now will be revealed to us. Commentary on John 4.9.3.[13]

9:4 *Working the Works of Him Who Sent Me*

Christ and the Father's Work Is the Same. Chrysostom: He says here, "I must reveal myself and do those things that may show that I do the same things with the Father"—not things "similar" but "the same." This is an expression that marks greater invariability and that is used of those who do not differ even a little. Who then, after this, will face him when he sees that he had the same power with the Father? For not only did he form or open eyes; he also gave the gift of sight. This is proof that he also breathed in the soul. If that [soul] did not work, the eye, though perfected, could never see anything. He gave both the energy,[14] which is from the soul, and gave the member also, possessing all things, both arteries and nerves and veins, and all things of which our body is composed. Homilies on the Gospel of John 56.2.[15]

Beyond Life Is Neither Faith, Labor Nor Repentance. Chrysostom: "While it is day" means I must work while people can still believe on me as long as this life lasts. "The night comes," that is, the future, "when no one can work." He did not say, "when I cannot work" but "when no one can work," that is, when there is no longer faith, labors or repentance. For to show that he called faith a "work," . . . he replied, "This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he has sent." Why then can no one do this kind of work in the future world? Because there is no faith there, but all, whether willingly or unwillingly, will simply submit. Homilies on the Gospel of John 56.2.[16]

God Prefers Holy Action over Idle Speculation. Cyril of Alexandria: Here Jesus is saying, "Why do you ask questions that are better left unsaid? Or why, leaving what suits the time, do you hurry to learn things beyond the capacity of people? It is not a time for such curiosity," he says, "but for intense work. I think it is

[11]See Eccles 3:21-22. [12]LF 48:13-14*. [13]CSCO 4 3:182-83. [14]Or "noble birth." [15]NPNF 1 14:202**. [16]NPNF 1 14:202**.

more appropriate to pass by such questions and instead zealously execute God's commands." Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[17]

After the Resurrection Comes the Night for Unbelievers. Augustine: After the resurrection of the living and the dead, when he will say to those placed at his right hand, "Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom," and to those at his left, "Depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,"[18] then shall be the night when no one can work but only get back what he has previously done. There is a time for working, another for receiving; for the Lord shall render to every one according to his works.[19] While you live, do something if you are to be doing anything at all. For then that appalling night shall come to envelop the wicked it its folds. But even now every unbeliever, when he dies, is received within that night: there is no work to be done there. In that night was the rich man burning and asking a drop of water from the beggar's finger.[20] . . . Unhappy man! When you were living, that was the time for working. Now you are already in the night in which no one can work. Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.6.[21]

9:5 *The Light of the World*

The Light of Souls and of the Blind. Theodore of Heraclea: He calls himself light both because he enlightens the souls of those who believe and because he was about to open the eyes of the one who was blind from birth. Fragments on John 71.[22]

The Light Shines in the Darkness of Dust. Ephrem the Syrian: And he brought forth the light from the dust, just as he had done in the beginning, when there was a shadow of the heavens."Darkness was spread out over everything."[23] He gave a command to the light, and it was born from the darkness. Thus also here, he formed clay from his saliva, and he supplied was what lacking in creation, which was from the beginning, to show that what was lacking in nature was being supplied by his hand. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 16.28.[24]

The Light Lasts Until the End of the World. Augustine: What is that night in which, when it comes, no one shall be able to work? Hear what the day is, and then you will understand what the night is. But how shall we hear what the day is? Let he himself tell us: "As long as I am in this world, I am the light of the world." See, he himself is the day. . . . The natural day is completed by the circuit of the sun and contains only a few hours. The day of Christ's presence will last to the end of the world, for he himself has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."[25] Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.5-6.[26]

The Blinding Brightness of the Lord. Chrysostom: "Believe while the light is with you,"[27] he said to others. Why then did Paul call this life "night" and that other "day"? He was not opposing Christ but saying the same thing, even if not in those exact words—although the sense is the same. For he also says, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand."[28] He calls the present time "night," because of those who sit in darkness or because he compares it with that day that is to come. Christ calls the future "night" because sin has no power to work there, but Paul calls the present life "night" because those who continue in wickedness and unbelief are in darkness. Addressing himself then to the faithful, he said, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand," since they should enjoy that light. And he calls the old life night. "Let us put away," he says, "the works of darkness." Do you see that he tells them that it is "night"? Therefore he says, "Let us walk honestly as in the day," that we may enjoy that light.

[17]LF 48:16**. [18]Mt 25:34, 41. [19]Mt 16:27. [20]Lk 16:24-28. [21]NPNF 1 7:247*. [22]*JKGK* 85. [23]Gen 1:2-3. [24]CB709:186-188. [25]Mt 28:20. [26]NPNF 1 7:246-47**. [27]Jn 12:36. [28]Rom 13:12.

For if *this* light is so good, consider what *that* light will be. As much as the sunlight is brighter than the flame of a candle, so much and far more is that light better than this. And signifying this, Christ says that "the sun shall be darkened." Because of the excess of that brightness, not even the sun shall be seen. Homilies on the Gospel of John 56.3.[29]

9:6 *He Made Mud and Spread It on the Man's Eyes*

Jesus Completes His Work as Creator. Irenaeus: He healed others by a word. . . . But the Lord bestowed sight on the one who was blind from birth—not by a word, but by an outward action. He did this neither casually nor simply because this was how it happened. He did it this way in order to show it was the same hand of God here that had also formed man at the beginning. And therefore when his disciples asked him why he had been born blind, whether by his own fault or his parents', Jesus said, "Neither this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God might be manifested in him." The work of God is, after all, the forming of man. He did this by an outward action, as Scripture says, "And the Lord took clay from earth, and formed man."[30] Notice here too how the Lord spit on the earth, and made clay and smeared it on his eyes, showing how the ancient creation was made. He was making clear to those who can understand, that this was the [same] hand of God through which man was formed from clay. For what the creating Word had neglected to form in the womb, this he supplied openly. He did this so that the works of God might be evident in him, and so that we would now seek for no other hand than that through which humanity was formed. Nor should we seek another Father, knowing that the hand of God which formed us in the beginning, and forms in the womb, has in the last times sought us lost ones out. He is gaining his own lost sheep and putting it on his shoulders and joyfully restoring it to the fold of life. Against Heresies 5.15.2.[31]

Anointing of the Eyes with Clay. Origen: I think this has been said to establish that Christ's saliva had a quality of healing power. Even though the blind man did not himself ask to receive his sight, yet he will be found praiseworthy in delivering himself to Jesus anointing his eyes with clay and in doing without hesitation what had been enjoined him, without Jesus having even said that he would receive sight. . . . Let us therefore wash off the clay smeared in our eyes in the water of the pool of him [i.e., Jesus] who has been sent so that after this we may be able to see again. But you will understand by the clay the beginning of the rudiments of the oracles of God, according to which we as babies are fed with milk. But when the childish things are done away with and we eat solid food, we wipe away the clay so that we may return to Jesus as one who sees. Fragment 63 on the Gospel of John.[32]

Proving Jesus Is Creator. Ammonius: He spat on the ground and made mud out of the saliva and he daubed the mud onto the eyes of the blind man. He wanted to show with the mud that he himself is the one who made Adam from the earth. His statement that "I am the one doing this" seemed to make his hearer hostile to him. But have shown himself to be the one through this work that he did—this, finally, did not give offense. Therefore, he fashioned eyes in that way rather than simply healing them. And he did not only make the eyes or open them but also graced them with the ability to see. This is positive proof that he had also breathed a soul into Adam. For he would never have seen, even if the eye had been completed, unless that life-giving spirit that breathed into Adam was at work. Fragments on John 317.[33]

Law and Grace, Ground and Saliva. Cae-

[29]NPNF 1 14:202-3**. [30]Gen 2:7. [31]ANF 1:543**. See also *Against Heresies* 5.16.1. This is a common theme in patristic interpretation. See also Chrysostom *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 56.2 and Theodore *Commentary on John* 4.9.6-7. [32]*AEG* 4:3-4*; GCS 10 (4):533-34. [33]*JKGK* 276.

sarius of Arles: In the ground we understand the law, and grace is designated in the saliva. What does the law effect without grace? What does the ground do without the saliva of Christ? What does the law do without grace, except make people still more guilty? Why? Because the law knows how to obey but not how to help; the law can point out sin, but it cannot take sin away from people. Therefore, let the saliva of Christ go down to the ground and gather together the earth. Let he who made the earth remake it, and he who created it reform and recreate it. Likewise, in the saliva is understood the word of God, his real human body on earth. For this reason let the saliva of Christ down in order that the law may be fulfilled. "He made clay with the saliva." What is saliva mixed with clay, except the incarnate Word? That blind man presented an image of the whole human race, and, therefore, the saliva was mixed with clay, and the blind man was made to see: the Word became incarnate, and the world was illumined. Sermon 172.3.[34]

Why Not Water Instead of Saliva? Chrysostom: And why didn't he use water instead of saliva for the clay? He was about to send the man to Siloam. In order, therefore, that nothing might be ascribed to the fountain but that you might learn that the power proceeds from his mouth—the same, both formed and opened the man's eyes—he "spat on the ground." . . . And then, so that you might not think that it was the earth that healed him, he commanded him to wash. Homilies on the Gospel of John 57.1.[35]

9:7 *Go, Wash in the Pool of Siloam*

Healing Does Not Occur in Jesus' Presence. Origen: But to heal in his absence, to tell him to go away and wash and to provide the healing only once he has washed—this was the work of someone who wanted to be sure that no one would be ignorant of the miracle that had taken place. For as he commanded the paralytic to take up his bed on the day when it was not lawful to do this—so that each man charging him with the transgression might learn the greatness of the miracle—in the same way he commanded this man who was at a distance from the pool to go there and wash. Fragment 63 on the Gospel of John.[36]

The Washing of Regeneration. Irenaeus: As, therefore, we are formed in the womb by the Word, this very same Word also formed sight in the one who had been blind from his birth. In this way, he openly showed who it is who forms us in secret, since now the Word himself had been revealed to the world. It also made known the ancient formation of Adam and how he was made, and through what hand he was formed—indicating the whole [of Adam's creation] by showing us a part [of it]. For the Lord who formed sight is he who has formed the entire person, and in doing so, carried out the will of the Father. But in respect to that formation in men and women that took place after Adam—when humanity fell into sin—there was a need for the washing of regeneration. This is why the Lord said to the man to whom he had given sight, "Go to Siloam and wash." In this way, he provided both his physical reformation and his regeneration which comes through washing. And this is why, when he washed, he came back seeing. He would come to know his creator and humanity would come to know him who has given us life. Against Heresies 5.15.3.[37]

You Too Come to Siloam. Ambrose: Again, I ask you: What is he trying to convey to us by spitting on the ground, mixing his saliva with clay and putting it on the eyes of a blind man, saying, "Go and wash yourself in the pool of Siloam (a name that means 'sent')"? What is the meaning of the Lord's action in this? Surely one of great significance, since the person whom Jesus touches receives more than just his sight.

[34]FC 47:426-27*. [35]NPNF 1 14:204**. [36]*AEG* 4:4-5*; GCS 10 (4):535. [37]ANF 1:543**.

In one instant we see both the power of his divinity and the strength of his holiness. As the divine light, he touched this man and enlightened him. As priest, by an action symbolizing baptism he wrought in him his work of redemption. The only reason for his mixing clay with the saliva and smearing it on the eyes of the blind man was to remind you that he who restored the man to health by anointing his eyes with clay is the very one who fashioned the first man out of clay, and that this clay that is our flesh can receive the light of eternal life through the sacrament of baptism.

You, too, should come to Siloam, that is, to him who was sent by the Father, as he says in the Gospel: "My teaching is not my own; it comes from him who sent me." Let Christ wash you, and you will then see. Come and be baptized, it is time; come quickly, and you too will be able to say, "I went and washed"; you will be able to say, "I was blind, and now I can see." And, as the blind man said when his eyes began to receive the light, you too can say, "The night is almost over and the day is at hand." Letter 67.4-6.[38]

The Power of the Lord's Word. Ephrem the Syrian: For Siloam did not open [the eyes of] the blind man, just as the waters of the Jordan did not purify Naaman,[39] but rather it was the command [by our Lord] that brought the healing. Also, it is not the waters of our atonement that bring purification; rather, it is the names invoked over it[40] that produce atonement for us. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 16.29.[41]

9:8 *The Former Beggar?*

Having Washed, He Encounters Grace. Theodore of Mopsuestia: After having gone and washed, he encountered grace. And yet his neighbors and those who were with him when he was begging did not all come to the same conclusion about him. There were some who said that he was indeed the blind man, but others, because of the miracle that had happened to him, said it was not him but someone like him. He, however, says that it is him, not because the event itself compelled him to but because he was eager to proclaim before everyone what had happened. Commentary on John 4.9.8.[42]

Jesus Even Heals Beggars. Chrysostom: The strangeness of the miracle made people incredulous. The neighbors and those who had seen that he was blind said, "Is this now the man who used to sit and beg?" What wonderful clemency and condescension of God! With such great kindness he even heals the beggars. In this way he shuts up the mouths of the Jews, because he made, not the great, illustrious and noble, but the poorest and meanest, the objects of his providence. Indeed, he had come for the salvation of all. Homilies on the Gospel of John 57.1.[43]

9:9 *I Am the Man*

The Long Walk to the Pool Enables Recognition. Chrysostom: Why didn't he have him wash immediately instead of sending him to Siloam? . . . For one thing, everyone would probably see him as he was leaving, having the clay spread upon his eyes. The strangeness of this spectacle would most likely focus the attention of everyone on him—both those who knew him and those who did not—everyone would be watching him closely. And, because it is not easy to recognize a blind man who has recovered his sight, Jesus first of all sends him this long distance so that he can be seen by many witnesses. This bizarre spectacle of a man walking with mud on his eyes would make these witnesses even more attentive so that no one could any longer say, "This is not he." Homilies on the Gospel of John 57.1.[44]

---

[38]CSEL 82 2:166-67. Cyril speaks of his healing as a type of the Gentiles' salvation; see *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 6.1. [39]2 Kings 5:14. [40]The water of atonement refers to the baptismal liturgy, and the names that are pronounced over it are those of the Trinity. [41]CB709:188. [42]CSCO 4 3:188-89. [43]NPNF 1 14:204-5**. [44]NPNF 1 14:204**.

9:10 *How Were Your Eyes Opened?*

The Blind Leading the Blind to See. Ephrem the Syrian: Those who could see were clearly being drawn to the blind man, who saw inwardly. The blind man was being drawn secretly to those who could see but who were blind inwardly. He [the blind man] washed away the clay from his eyes and appeared to himself. They washed the blindness from their hearts and gained approval for themselves. When our Lord opened up the eyes of one blind man clearly in that moment, he opened up [the eyes of] many blind people secretly. For that blind man was [surely] blind. He was like a source of profit for our Lord, for by him our Lord acquired many blind people [by healing them] from the blindness of their heart. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 16.30.[45]

9:11 *The Man Called Jesus Made Clay and Anointed My Eyes*

Still Ignorant of Who Jesus Is. Cyril of Alexandria: He appears still to be ignorant that the Savior is by nature God, for otherwise he would not have spoken of him in such an unworthy way. He probably thought of him as a holy man, forming this opinion from the rumors that were circulating around Jerusalem. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[46]

The Miracle Described from the Blind Man's Perspective. Chrysostom: Notice how precise he is. He does not say how the clay was made since he could not see that our Lord spat on the ground. He does not say what he does not know. He did not see Jesus spit on the ground, but he could feel it when he spread the mud on his eyes. "And he said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash.'" This too he could mention because he heard it. For he had heard our Lord in conversation with his disciples and so he knew his voice. Even after all this, however, he cannot tell how he was cured. Now if faith is needed in matters that are felt and handled by the senses, how much more in the case of what is invisible? Homilies on the Gospel of John 57.2.[47]

The Blind Evangelist. Augustine: See how he became a herald of grace. See how he preaches the gospel. See how, once he is endowed with sight, he becomes a witness. That blind man testified, and the ungodly were troubled in their hearts because they did not have in their own hearts what they saw in him. Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.8.[48]

9:12 *Where Is He?*

He Does Not Know Because He Was Blind. Theodore of Mopsuestia: They were asking him, "Where is he?" His reply was that he did not know because he had not seen him, since at the time [of the healing] he was blind. Commentary on John 4.9.12.[49]

Opened Eyes Later Testify. Ephrem the Syrian: His saliva was thus the key for closed eyes, for with water he healed the eye. From the water [he formed] clay and brought to wholeness what had been lost. When [later] they were spitting at his face,[50] the blind eyes that had been opened by his saliva would accuse them. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 16.32.[51]

---

[45]CB709:188. [46]LF 48:22*. [47]NPNF 1 14:205**. [48]NPNF 1 7:247**. [49]CSCO 4 3:189. [50]See Mt 26:67. [51]CB709:190.

THE INVESTIGATION OF THE HEALING BY THE PHARISEES JOHN 9:13-34

Overview: Jesus performs this healing on the sabbath in violation of Jewish law (Chrysostom). In spite of this seeming violation, the one healed is determined to show that the power of the healer was not exerted in vain (Cyril of Alexandria); the Pharisees' focus remains on the violation. There is a carnal and a spiritual keeping of the Sabbath, which they do not seem to comprehend (Augustine). For instance, there was a precedent for work on the sabbath in the cases of Joshua and Jericho (Cyril of Alexandria).

In the present account, there is such a concentration on whether Jesus could do the miracle on the sabbath that the magnificence of the miracle gets lost in the flurry of accusations (Chrysostom). Even the blind man gets enlisted as an arbi-

ter in the dispute among the Pharisees (Theodore of Mopsuestia). He provides his own confession of faith in the midst of the dispute, a confession that, while true, at this point is still incomplete (Augustine). Those who witness the miracle try to nullify the results through their questioning of the parents (Chrysostom). The parents also, albeit unintentionally, expose their son to harm (Origen) by maintaining there is no need for them to speak for a grown man (Augustine). The consequences of the Jewish leaders' unbelief threaten to spill over onto the parents, whose own salvation is threatened by them (Theodore of Heraclea). But there is no need for fear of being thrown out of the synagogue, for whatever has been cast out unjustly, Christ takes back in (Augustine). The Pharisees nonetheless try to hide their attack under the guise of religion (Chrysostom) but end up blaspheming God instead (Augustine).

When the Pharisees question the man who was healed, he demonstrates prudence in his answer (Theodore of Mopsuestia) as well as boldness of faith (Chrysostom). The blind man no longer tolerates blindness in others (Augustine) and demonstrates that he has already become a disciple of Jesus (Cyril of Alexandria). The Pharisees, in turn, provide an unintentional compliment in acknowledging his discipleship (Augustine). No matter how hard they try to disprove what happened, the miracle remains incontrovertible evidence of the power of Jesus (Chrysostom). The Pharisees counter that God would not listen to sinners, but is this necessarily true (Origen)? Either way, the facts prove that Jesus is not a sinner (Theodore of Mopsuestia), and the testimony of the formerly blind man demonstrates the inferiority of the Pharisees' argument as well as his own insights of faith (Cyril of Alexandria).

9:13-14 *A Sabbath Day*

Jesus' Departure from the Law. Chrysostom: The Evangelist remarks that it was "the sabbath" in order to expose their real design . . . which was to accuse him of a departure from the law and thus detract from the miracle. Homilies on the Gospel of John 57.2.[1]

9:15 *Clay, Washing, Sight*

The Gift of Sight and the Gift of Faith. Cyril of Alexandria: Here, it is as though the man is saying: I will prove to you that the power of the Healer was not exerted in vain. I will not deny the favor I received, for I now possess what I formerly longed for. I who was blind from birth and afflicted from the womb, having been anointed with clay, am healed, and I see. That is, I do not merely show you my eye opened, concealing the darkness in its depth, but I really see. From now on I am able to look at things that formerly I could only hear about. Look! The bright light of the sun is shining around me. Look! The beauty of strange sights surrounds my eye. A short time ago I scarcely knew what Jerusalem was like. Now I see the temple of God glittering within it, and I behold in its midst the truly venerable altar. And if I stood outside the gate, I could look around on the country of Judea and recognize one thing as a hill and another as a tree. And when the time changes to evening, my eye will no longer fail to notice the beauty of the nighttime sky, the brilliant company of the stars and the golden light of the moon. When I do, I shall be amazed at the skill of him who made them "from the greatness and beauty of created things."[2] I as well as others shall acknowledge the great Creator. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[3]

9:16 *Not Keeping the Sabbath*

Carnal and Spiritual Keeping of Sabbath. Augustine: Those [Pharisees] who neither saw nor had yet been anointed[4] said, "This

[1]NPNF 1 14:205**. [2]Wis 13:5. [3]LF 48:26-27*. [4]Augustine is contrasting their blind eyes with the anointed eyes of the blind man.

man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath." On the contrary, he kept it because he was without sin; to observe the sabbath spiritually is to have no sin. And this is what God admonishes us when he commends the sabbath, saying, "You shall do no servile[5] work."[6] . . . Our Lord tells us above what servile work is: "Whoever commits sin is the servant of sin."[7] But these men, who neither could see nor were anointed, observed the sabbath carnally but profaned it spiritually. Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.9.[8]

Joshua Did Not Keep the Sabbath at Jericho. Cyril of Alexandria: The Jews admire the ancient hero Joshua who captured Jericho on the sabbath[9] and commanded their forefathers to do such things as are customary for conquerors—and Joshua himself by no means observed the proper sabbath rest. Yet, those who admire Joshua persistently attack Christ. Their personal ill will toward Christ prompted them not only to try and take away from him the glory due to God but also to rob him of the honor due to holy people. And speaking inconsiderately through their malice, they pour forth a charge of impiety against him who came to us from the Father and who justifies the world. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[10]

What About the Miracle Itself? Chrysostom: Passing over the miracle in silence, they give all the prominence they can to the supposed transgression. They do not charge him with "healing on the sabbath day" but with not "keeping the sabbath." "Others replied rather weakly, 'How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?'" They were impressed by his miracles, but only in a weak and unsettled way. For whereas the fact of whether the sabbath was broken or not might have divided them, they still had no idea yet that he was God. They did not know that it was the Lord of the sabbath who had worked the miracle. Nor did any of them dare to say openly what his sentiments were, but they spoke ambiguously—one, because he thought the fact itself improbable, another, from his love of status. It follows, "And there was a division among them." That is, the people were divided first, and then the rulers. Homilies on the Gospel of John 57.2.[11]

9:17 *What Do You Say About Him?*

The Blind Man As Arbiter of Their Division. Theodore of Mopsuestia: While they were discussing things, they turned to the blind man again, as if they chose him as their arbiter, and they said to him, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." Should we admire him for the work he performed? Or is he a sinner because he violated the sabbath? So about the one "who opened your eyes," that is, since he opened your eyes, what do you have to say about him? What is your opinion? The blind man wisely answered the question, saying, "He is a prophet," that is, that is the kind of respect I have for him, and it encapsulates what I think of the work he performed. When they saw that the miracle itself already testified to the power of the healer and that the blind man openly revealed the grace he had received and proclaimed the greatness of his helper, they began to doubt whether that man who had been healed was really the blind man or someone else. And so they were obliged to call his parents. Commentary on John 4.9.13-18.[12]

His Confession True, Though Incomplete. Augustine: There was a division among them as the day divided between the light and the darkness. . . . They were looking for a way to denigrate the man and cast him out of their synagogue (although he would be found by Christ). However, he declares openly what he thinks. For he said, "He is a prophet." Not yet anointed in heart, he could not confess the Son of God. Nev-

[5]RSV *laborious*. [6]Lev 23:8. [7]Jn 8:34. [8]NPNF 1 7:247**. [9]Josh 6:15. [10]LF 48:28**. [11]NPNF 1 14:206**. [12]CSCO 4 3:189-90.

ertheless, he is not wrong in what he says either, for our Lord even says of himself, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country."[13] Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.9.[14]

9:18 *They Called the Parents*

A Failed Attempt to Nullify the Miracle. Chrysostom: It is the nature of truth to be strengthened by the very snares that are laid against it by people. . . . Lies defeat themselves by the very means they use against the truth, making it appear even brighter, as is the case now. For the argument that might otherwise have been urged—that is, that the neighbors knew nothing for certain but were guessing on the basis that this man looked like the one who was healed—that whole argument is cut off by the introduction of the parents who could, of course, testify to their own son. The Pharisees, being unable by intimidation to deter the blind man from publicly proclaiming his benefactor, try to nullify the miracle through the parents. Homilies on the Gospel of John 58.1.[15]

9:19 *Is This Your Son?*

Two Questions to Bring About Denial. Chrysostom: Having brought the parents into the middle of the assembly in order to intimidate them, they angrily begin a fierce interrogation: "Is this your son?" Notice, they do not say, "who was born blind" but "who *you say* was born blind." . . . What kind of a father would say such things about his son if they were not true? Why not say at once, "Whom *you* made blind"? . . . They try two ways of making them deny the miracle by saying, "who you say was born blind" and then by adding, "How then does he now see?" Homilies on the Gospel of John 58.1-2.[16]

9:21 *He Is of Age*

The Parents Expose Their Son to Possible Harm. Origen: Besides having spoken falsely, they committed another sin by exposing their son to obvious harm. But I think this also has a reason. When the Savior opened the eyes of the blind man, he did not open those of a child but of one full grown so that he might see as a full-grown man. But such was also the case with other blind men who received sight. However, it is true that he being of full age can speak for himself, and especially so when Jesus makes him receive his sight. For he needs no one else to negotiate for him. Fragment 67 on the Gospel of John.[17]

No Need to Speak for a Grown Man. Augustine: The parents reply, We might justly be compelled to speak for him as an infant when he could not speak for himself . . . ; but even though we know he has been blind from birth, we also know that he has been able to speak for some time now. Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.10.[18]

9:22-23 *His Parents Feared Being Put Out of the Synagogue*

The Rulers' Unbelief. Theodore of Heraclea: Thus evil mastered the rulers who not only disabled themselves through unbelief but also through their threatening shut the way of salvation for the rest. Fragment on John 82.[19]

You Cast Out, Christ Takes In. Augustine: But it was no disadvantage to be put out of the synagogue since the one they cast out, Christ received. Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.10.[20]

9:24 *Give God the Praise*

[13]Mt 13:57. [14]NPNF 1 7:248**. [15]NPNF 1 14:207-8**. [16]NPNF 1 14:208**. In some of the homilies at this point, there is a slight difference in referencing between the Greek text and NPNF. We have chosen to stay with NPNF for ease of access in the English test.. [17]*AEG* 4:7*; GCS 10 (4):537. [18]NPNF 1 7:248**. [19]*JKGK* 87. [20]NPNF 1 7:248**.

Under the Guise of Religion. Chrysostom: The parents referred the Pharisees to the healed man himself, and so they summon him a second time. They do not openly say now, "Deny that Christ has healed you." Instead they conceal their objective under the pretense of religion. . . . They say, "Give God the glory," that is, confess that this man Jesus has had nothing to do with the work. Homilies on the Gospel of John 58.2.[21]

Blaspheme God. Augustine: They tell him to deny what he has received. This is not to give God the glory but rather to blaspheme him. Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.11.[22]

9:25 *Though I Was Blind, Now I See*

Another Prudent Answer. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He says, in effect, I do not want to declare what I do not know; nor can I keep silent or hide what I know. I really do not know whether he is what you say he is. In fact, I did not come to know him as a sinner. I was blind, and through my hope I received sight; I know this first of all. It is up to you to judge whether a sinner can do that, because this is what you assert he is.

He gave a quite prudent answer by moderating his words so that he might not appear to be in disagreement with those who questioned him. Through his silence he nonetheless suggested that [Jesus] could not have done what he did if he really were a sinner. Commentary on John 4.9.25.[23]

9:27 *Do You Too Want to Become His Disciples?*

The Boldness of Faith. Chrysostom: Do you see how boldly the beggar speaks with the scribes and Pharisees? It shows how strong truth is and how weak falsehood is. Truth, though it grasps only ordinary people, makes them to appear glorious; falsehood, even when it is among the strong, shows them to be weak. What he says is like this: you do not pay attention to my words; therefore, I will no longer speak or answer you when you question me continually to no purpose. You do not want to hear in order to learn but so that you can lay insults over my words. Homilies on the Gospel of John 58.2.[24]

No Longer Tolerating Blindness. Augustine: He was indignant now at the obstinacy of the Jews. Now that he is no longer blind himself, he can no longer tolerate their blindness either. Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.11.[25]

Already a Disciple. Cyril of Alexandria: He reveals his own state of mind that he was not only willing to become, but actually had already become, a disciple. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[26]

9:28-29 *Disciples of Moses*

A Compliment, but Not Intentional. Augustine: May such an "evil thing" be said of us and on our children! In other words, it was an evil thing [to say he was a disciple] from their point of view, but not if you think about the words themselves. They say, "But we are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses. But we have no idea where this person comes from." But if you [Pharisees] knew that God spoke to Moses, then you should have also known that God preached about our Lord through Moses after hearing what he said, "If you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me." Do you then follow a servant and turn your back on the Lord? But you do not even follow the servant, for he would guide you to the Lord. Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.12.[27]

9:30 *He Opened My Eyes*

[21]NPNF 1 14:208*. [22]NPNF 1 7:248**. [23]CSCO 4 3:191. [24]NPNF 1 14:209**. [25]NPNF 1 7:248**. [26]LF 48:41*. [27]NPNF 1 7:248**.

The Miracle Is Incontrovertible Evidence. Chrysostom: He brings in the miracle everywhere as evidence because they could not invalidate it. And he draws his own inferences from it too. First, he says, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I do not know." He has no doubt that Jesus was not a sinner. And so, when he has an opportunity, he turns their own words against them and defends Jesus: "Now we know that God does not listen to sinners." Homilies on the Gospel of John 58.3.[28]

9:31 *God Does Not Listen to Sinners*

Is It True That God Does Not Listen to Sinners? Origen: But if so important a doctrine were true, that is, that the sinner is not heard by God, it would not have been passed over in silence but would have been spoken by someone deserving to be believed, for example, by the servant [Moses] or one of the prophets. But how, if God did not hear a sinner, were the sinners taught to say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we also forgive our transgressors"? Whom then does God hear? He hears those who turn to him in repentance, even if they have not yet ceased from being sinners. If God did not hear sinners, our Savior would not have been eating and drinking with publicans and sinners. But if those needing physicians because they were sick were not being heard, he would not have healed them. Therefore, as if the prayer of those who have sinned but no longer altogether disbelieve attained its object, it is said, "If you mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"[29] But perhaps the blind man is speaking not about any ordinary thing in the prayer of the sinner but of the kind of great works that Jesus was doing. For when God is petitioned concerning those kinds of works by sinners, he does not hear them. Fragment 70 on the Gospel of John.[30]

9:33-34 *If This Man Were Not from God, He Could Do Nothing*

The Facts Prove Jesus Is Not a Sinner. Theodore of Mopsuestia: So Jesus must be admired, the blind man says, as one who is superior to human thought. While you do not know where he is from, the accomplished miracle openly proves his power to me. You do not know who he is and would need testimony from others if there had been no clue of his power. But if his miracles show that he is a great man—and you still do not know where he is from or who he is—it is evident, both from the greatness of his miracles and your foolishness, that he is beyond human comprehension. And from these facts it seems clear that he cannot be called a sinner. Certainly God does not fulfill the requests of sinners but listens instead to the voice of those who show honest behavior and faithfully do his will. . . . Indeed, he healed a man born blind, and we know that this has never been done before, not even by Moses, whom you admire. Commentary on John 4.9.30-32.[31]

The Insight of Faith. Cyril of Alexandria: He who had just received sight and had been miraculously freed from his old blindness was quicker to perceive truth than those who had been instructed by the law. See how through numerous and wise arguments he demonstrates the utter inferiority of the Pharisees' opinion. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[32]

[28]NPNF 1 14:209-10*. [29]Ps 130:3 (129:3 LXX). [30]*AEG* 4:7-8*; GCS 10 (4):538-39. [31]CSCO 4 3:192-93. [32]LF 48:50*.

Spiritual Blindness and Sin
John 9:35-41

Overview: Jesus elicits a confession of faith in his encounter with the blind man as a gift of life, not as a condition of healing (Hilary). Jesus is the personification of Siloam ("the sent one") for this man, since he performed the work of the Father who had sent him in healing this man (Augustine). When he asks the man if he believes in the Son of man, the blind man recognizes the voice of the one who healed him (Theodore) but still is on the borderline between unbelief and faith (Origen). But when the Lord reveals himself to the man, he does confess his faith, and worship follows this confession (Basil).

In this miracle, we see our Lord once again dividing between the light and the darkness, between the sight and blindness of faith (Augustine). Jesus' purpose in coming into the world becomes clear in his desire to save it (Theodore). Because the Pharisees refuse to see this, their sin remains (Augustine). Jesus heals both the physical and the spiritual blindness evident here (Chrysostom).

9:35 *Do You Believe in the Son of Man?*

Christ Elicits a Confession of Faith. Hilary of Poitiers: When the man was already healed and had suffered ejection from the synagogue, the Lord put to him the question, "Do you believe on the Son of God?" This was to save him from the thought that he had lost everything by being excluded from the synagogue. It gave him the certainty that confession of the true faith had restored him to immortality. When the man, his soul still unenlightened, answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" the Lord's reply was, "You have both seen him, and it is he that speaks with you." For his goal was to remove the ignorance of the man whose sight he had restored and whom he was now enriching with the knowledge of so glorious a faith. Does the Lord demand from this man, as from others who entreated him to heal them, a confession of faith as the price of their recovery? Emphatically not! For the blind man could already see when he was thus addressed. The Lord asked the question in order to receive the answer, "Lord, I believe." The faith that spoke in that answer was to receive not sight but life. On the Trinity 6.48.[1]

Jesus Himself Was Siloam. Augustine: Of course God listens to sinners. But the man who said that had not yet washed the face of his heart in Siloam. The sacrament had already taken place in his eyes, but the benefit of grace had not yet been achieved in his heart. When did this blind man wash the face of his heart? When, after he had been thrown outside by the Jews, the Lord

[1]NPNF 2 9:115-16**.

brought him inside into himself. You see, he found him and said to him, as we heard, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" And he answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" He could already see him, certainly, with his eyes, but with his heart? Not yet. Wait for it; he will see in a moment. Jesus answered him, "I am, I who am talking to you." Did he hesitate? He washed his face immediately. After all, Siloam was talking to him, "which is translated as 'the One sent.'"[2] Who is the one sent but Christ who frequently asserted, "I do the will of my Father, who sent me"?[3] So he himself was Siloam. The man blind in heart approached, heard, believed, worshiped, washed his face and saw. Sermon 136.2.[4]

9:36 *Who Is He?*

He Recognizes the Voice. Theodore of Mopsuestia: The blind man, recognizing his voice—remember he had not seen him yet—said, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." With good reason he thought that he who had given him sight even though he was beyond hope could also show him the Son of God. Commentary on John 4.9.34-37.[5]

A Beginner's Confession of Faith. Origen: Since he could not yet say "I believe" but as in ignorance answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" he was therefore on the borderline, so to speak, between unbelief and belief. Fragment 71 on the Gospel of John.[6]

9:38 *Lord, I Believe*

Worship Follows Faith. Basil the Great: Worship follows faith, and faith is confirmed by power. But if you say that believers also know, they know from what they believe; and vice versa, they believe from what they know. We know God from his power. We, therefore, believe in him who is known, and we worship him who is believed. Letter 234.3.[7]

9:39 *Coming into the World for Judgment*

Light and Darkness, Seeing and Blind. Augustine: The day then was divided between light and darkness. . . . And this is only right since you, O Lord, are the light, you are the day, you deliver us from darkness. Every soul accepts and understands this. But what is this that follows, "And those who see may become blind"? Because you have arrived, shall those who saw now be made blind? Hear what comes next, and maybe you will understand. "Some of the Pharisees" were disturbed by these words "and said to him, 'Are we also blind?'" What had moved them were the words "And those who see may become blind." "Jesus said to them, . . . 'If you were blind, you would have no sin,'" that is, if you identified yourselves as blind you would run to the physician. . . . For I have come to take away sin. But now you say, "We see." Therefore your sin remains. Why? Because when you say that you see, you are not looking for a physician, and that is why you will remain in your blindness. Therefore, what he has just said before about coming for those who do not see so that they may see concerns those who acknowledge that they do not see and seek a physician so that they may receive their sight. "And those who see may become blind" concerns those who think they can see without looking for a physician, and so they remain in their blindness. He calls this act of division "judgment," saying, "For judgment I came into this world." . . . He is not referring here to that "judgment" when he will judge the living and the dead at the end of the world. Tractates on the Gospel of John 44.16-17.[8]

The Purpose and Outcome of Jesus' Coming. Theodore of Mopsuestia: What Jesus said elsewhere, namely, "God did not send his

[2]Jn 9:7. [3]Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38. [4]*WSA* 3 4:354. [5]CSCO 4 3:194. [6]*AEG* 4:10; GCS 10 (4):539-40. [7]NPNF 2 8:274*. Cyril *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 6.1 sees the worship of the Gentiles prefigured here. [8]NPNF1 7:249**.

Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order to save it,"[9] is not contrary to this statement. For there it states the purpose of Jesus' coming: that all people may be saved. Here he talks about the outcome of his coming. In fact, even though this is his will, that is, to save all people, the unbelievers nonetheless must be absolutely punished because of their choice not to believe. Here he indicates what seems to be the outcome of these events. As is only reasonable, he says, I came to test individuals in order to ascertain who are blind and who are able to see. Now he who was believed to be blind, twice received eyes to see. He received bodily eyes and, to the perfection of his soul, he received saving doctrine. Those [i.e., the Pharisees] who think they see with bodily eyes, who have been entrusted with the teaching of the precepts of the law, appear to be blind, both because they do not accept the truth and because they do not believe the works that they have seen with their own eyes. Commentary on John 4.9.39-41.[10]

9:40-41 *Are We Also Blind?*

Unconfessed Sin Remains. Augustine: That is why, when the Pharisees who were listening to what he was saying, themselves said, "We are not blind too, are we?" They were obviously like the one who had gone up to the temple and was telling God, "I thank you, because I am not like other people, unjust, adulterers, rapacious,"[11] as though to say, "I thank you that I am not blind but can see, unlike other people of the same sort as this tax collector." What did those ones say? "We are not blind too, are we?" And the Lord answered them, "If you were blind, you would not have any sin. Now however, because you say 'We can see,' your sins remain." He did not say "your sin occurs" but remains. You see, it was already there; because when you do not confess it, it is not taken away but "remains." Sermon 136b.2.[12]

Two Recoveries of Sight, Two Types of Blindness. Chrysostom: In this passage he speaks of two recoveries of sight and of two types of blindness: one sensory and the other spiritual. . . . But they were intent only on the sensory things and were ashamed only of sensory blindness. And so, in order to show them that it would be better for them to be blind than seeing as they do, he says, "If you were blind, you would have no sin," . . . your punishment would be more tolerable. . . . "But now you say 'We see,'" but you do not see at all. He shows that what they considered as so great and praiseworthy actually brought them punishment instead. At the same time, he also consoles him who was blind from his birth concerning his former maimed state. And then he speaks concerning their blindness. For he directs his whole speech toward this purpose, that is, so that they cannot say, "We did not refuse to come to you because of our blindness, but we turn away and avoid you as a deceiver." And there is also a reason the Evangelist adds, "And some of the Pharisees who were with him heard these words." He wants to remind us that those were the very persons who had first withstood Christ and then wished to stone him. For there were some who only followed in appearance and were easily changed to the contrary opinion. Homilies on the Gospel of John 59.1-2.[13]

[9]Jn 3:17. [10]CSCO 4 3:194-95. [11]Lk 18:11. [12]*WSA* 3 4:364. [13]NPNF 1 14:213**.

THE PARABLE OF THE SHEEPFOLD ENTRANCE JOHN 10:1-6

Overview: The shepherd leads the sheep rather than following them, and he gathers them in rather than letting them wander (Chrysologus). He instructs them in Scripture, which is the door of entry into the sheepfold of Christ (Chrysostom). Those who confess the true Christ enter through that door (Augustine). Shepherds use the door while thieves use whatever entrance is possible (Theodore), including the side door (Clement). When the true shepherd enters by the door, he enters in by Christ (Augustine) and demonstrates he is a worthy shepherd by faithfully teaching the flock and keeping from them any doctrine that might lead to their slaughter (Theodore). Moses is one of the gatekeepers of Scripture (Chrysostom), along with Christ and the Holy Spirit (Augustine) and the angel of Revelation who presides over the churches (Cyril of Alexandria). The door of Scripture is opened with study and prayer (Origen).

Sheep hear the voice of their Shepherd and do not listen to strangers (Gregory of Nazianzus). Christ leads his sheep in the midst of the wolves (Chrysostom), leading them to freedom (Augustine). With the condition of our world the way it is, sheep need a shepherd (Clement). Our shepherd, Christ, leads his sheep instead of following them as some shepherds might do (Chrysostom). He leads them from death to life (Augustine). Can you discern the voice of the shepherd (Gregory of Nazianzus)? The good shepherd goes after the strays feeding the sheep with plain words and exercising them by obscure ones (Augustine).

Bringing in the Sheep. Peter Chrysologus: Each year, when spring with its breezes begins to usher in the birth of so many sheep and to deposit the numerous young of the fruitful flock about the fields, the meadows and the paths, a good shepherd puts aside his songs and leisure. He anxiously searches for the tender little sheep, picks them up and gathers them together. Happy to carry them, he places them about his neck, on his shoulders and in his arms. He wants them to be safe as he carries or leads them to the protecting sheepfolds.

That is the case with ourselves, too. When we see our ecclesiastical flock gaining rich increase under the favoring smile of the spring of Lent, we put aside the resonant tones of our treatise and the customary fare of our discourse. Concerned about our very heavy labor, we give all our concern[1] to gathering and carrying in the heavenly [lambs]. Sermon 40.[2]

[1]This is evidence that in Lent, Chrysologus, like other bishops of the time, omitted his customary preaching to devote his time to the instruction of the catechumens. [2]FC 17:85-86*.

10:1 *A Thief Does Not Enter the Sheepfold by the Door*

Scripture Is the Door. Chrysostom: Observe the marks of a robber. First, that he does not enter openly. Second, he does not enter according to the Scriptures, for this is, "not by the door." Here also, Jesus refers to those who had been before and to those who would come after him: antichrist and the false christs, Judas and Theudas, and whoever else there have been of the same kind. And he rightly calls the Scriptures "a door," for they bring us to God and open to us the knowledge of God. They make us his sheep. They guard us and do not let the wolves come in after us. For Scripture, like some sure door, bars the passage against the heretics, placing us in a state of safety as to all that we desire and not allowing us to wander. And, if we do not undo Scripture, we shall not easily be conquered by our enemies. By Scripture we can know all, both those who are and those who are not shepherds. But what does "into the fold" mean? It refers to the sheep and their care. For whoever does not use the Scriptures but "climbs up some other way," that is, who cuts out for himself another and an unusual way, "the same is a thief." . . . When our Lord further on calls himself the door, we should not be surprised. According to the office that he bears, he is in one place the shepherd, in another the sheep. In that he introduces us to the Father, he is the door; in that he takes care of us, he is the shepherd. Homilies on the Gospel of John 59.2-3.[3]

The True Christ. Augustine: Keep hold of this, that Christ's sheepfold is the church. Whoever would enter the sheepfold, let him enter by the door; let him preach the true Christ. Not only let him preach the true Christ but also seek Christ's glory, not his own. For many, by seeking their own glory, have scattered Christ's sheep instead of gathering them. Tractates on the Gospel of John 45.5.[4]

Only the Shepherd Has Authority to Use the Entrance. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Our current circumstance is a lot like the sheepfold: the thief comes from wherever it is possible for him to hide. His desire is to steal. But the shepherd who has authority to use the entrance leads the sheep out to pasture, and they follow him, knowing their own shepherd, while they avoid the others whose voice they do not know. Commentary on John 4.10.1.[5]

Enter Through the Tradition of the Lord. Clement of Alexandria: Those, then, who follow impious words and dictate them to others, inasmuch as they pervert the divine words instead of using them rightly, neither enter into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor do they permit those whom they have deluded to attain the truth. They do not have the key for the entrance but a false key. Using this counterfeit key, they do not enter in as we enter in, that is, through the tradition of the Lord by drawing aside the curtain. Instead they burst through the side door and dig clandestinely through the wall of the church. They step over the truth and constitute themselves the Mystagogues[6] of the soul of the impious. Stromateis 7.17[7]

10:2 *The Shepherd Enters by the Door*

Enter by the Door Imitating Christ's Humility. Augustine: Who is he who enters by the door? It is he who enters in by Christ. Who is he? He is the one who imitates the suffering of Christ, who is acquainted with the humility of Christ, so as to feel and know that if God became man for us, [a] man should not think himself God but man [humankind]. He who being man wishes to appear God does not imitate him who, being God, became man. You are not asked to think less of yourself than you are but to know what you are. Sermon 87(137).4[8]

[3]NPNF 1 14:213-14**. [4]NPNF 1 7:250**. [5]CSCO 4 3:197. [6]Those who initiate into the mysteries. [7]ANF 2:554. [8]NPNF 1 6:518**.

Who Is Worthy to Be a Shepherd? Theodore of Mopsuestia: The shepherd of the sheep is the one who is worthily endowed with the gift of teaching. He is the one who uses the lawful entrance, that is, who lives with all his heart according to the doctrine of the law and so enters into the sheepfold, as is only right. Then he leads all the others, like sheep, to the pastures of doctrine by showing them the food of the Word with which they must nourish themselves first and continually afterwards. He also leads them by showing them the power of the Word, how Scripture must be understood and from which doctrine they must abstain—doctrine that others may deceitfully propose to them for the slaughter of the sheep. . . . The thief and bandit is the exact opposite. He neither uses the lawful entrance, nor does he show respect for the precepts of the law. This is how he teaches the people given to him. In vain he tries to take hold of the entrance and of the dignity of the teacher, even though he does nothing that is required for such an honor. He is inconsiderate and does everything without regard to how it may harm the sheep. Indeed how can he be useful to others when he does not exercise himself in the precepts of the law? Take a look if you want, our Lord says, and discern between me and you as to who uses the lawful entrance. See who diligently follows the precepts of the law. See to whom Moses, the gatekeeper of the sheepfold, opens the gate and whom he praises for finishing his work. See whose works themselves testify to his worthiness to be called the Shepherd. Commentary on John 4.10.1-6.[9]

10:3 *The Gatekeeper Opens the Door for the Shepherd*

Moses the Gatekeeper. Chrysostom: The gatekeeper perhaps is Moses, for to him the oracles of God were committed. Homilies on the Gospel of John 59.3.[10]

Christ or the Holy Spirit the Gatekeeper. Augustine: Whoever you understand here, be careful that you do not think that the porter is greater than the door; for in our houses the doorman usually ranks above the door, not the door above the doorman. . . . The doorman is our Lord himself. There is much less difference between a door and a doorman than between a door and a shepherd. And he has called himself both the door and the shepherd. Why then not the door and the doorman? . . . For what is the door? The way of entrance. Who is the doorkeeper? He who opens it. Who, then, is he that opens himself, but he who reveals himself to sight? . . . If you seek another person for doorman, take the Holy Spirit . . . of whom our Lord below said, "He will guide you into all truth."[11] What is the door? Christ. What is Christ? The truth. Who opens the door but the one who will guide you into all truth? Tractates on the Gospel of John 46.2-4.[12]

The Gatekeeper. Cyril of Alexandria: The gatekeeper is either the angel who is appointed to preside over the churches[13] and to assist those whose lot is to minister in holy things for the good of the people, or else [the gatekeeper is] the Savior himself, who is at the same time both the Door and the Lord of the door. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[14]

The Door of Scripture Opened with Study and Prayer. Origen: My child, diligently apply yourself to the reading of the sacred Scriptures. Apply yourself, I say. For we who read the things of God need to do so often, otherwise we might say or think something too rashly about them. And applying yourself in this way to the study of the things of God, with faithful preconceptions that are well pleasing to God, knock at its locked door, and it will be opened to you by the gatekeeper, of whom Jesus says, "To him the gatekeeper opens." And applying yourself in this

[9]CSCO 4 3:197-98. [10]NPNF 1 14:214*. [11]Jn 16:13. [12]NPNF 1 7:256-57**. [13]See Rev. 2. [14]LF 48:64**.

way to the divine study, seek the meaning of the holy Scriptures that so many have missed, but do so in the right way and with unwavering trust in God. Do not be satisfied with knocking and seeking; for prayer is, of all things, indispensable to the knowledge of the things of God. This is what the Savior encourages us to do, saying not only, "Knock, and it shall be opened to you; and seek, and you shall find,"[15] but also, "Ask, and it shall be given to you."[16] Letter to Gregory 4.[17]

Do Not Listen to Strangers. Gregory of Nazianzus: These I call by name . . . and they follow me, for I herd them up beside the waters of rest. They follow every shepherd whose voice they love to hear. . . . But they will not follow a stranger. Instead, they will flee from him because they have a habit of distinguishing the voice of their own from that of strangers. Against the Arians and on Himself, Oration 33.16.[18]

He Leads Them Out Amid the Wolves. Chrysostom: When he sent out the sheep, he sent them not out of the reach of, but into the midst of, the wolves.[19] For far more wonderful is this way of keeping sheep than what we do. There also seems to be a secret allusion to the blind man. He called him out of the midst of the Jews, and he heard his voice. Homilies on the Gospel of John 59.3.[20]

Christ Leads Sheep to Freedom. Augustine: And who else leads them out but the same one who loosens the chain of their sins so that, unfettered, they may follow him? Tractates on the Gospel of John 45.14.[21]

10:4 *The Sheep Follow the Shepherd*

Sheep Need a Shepherd. Clement of Alexandria: In our sickness we need a Savior, in our wanderings a guide, in our blindness someone to show us the light, in our thirst the fountain of living water that quenches forever the thirst of those who drink from it. We dead people need life, we sheep need a shepherd, we children need a teacher, the whole world needs Jesus! Christ the Educator 1.9.83.[22]

Shepherds Usually Follow Sheep. Chrysostom: Shepherds always follow behind their sheep, but he, on the contrary, goes before them to show that he would lead all of them to the truth. Homilies on the Gospel of John 59.3.[23]

Christ Leads Sheep from Death. Augustine: And who has gone before the sheep to the place where they are to follow him but he who rising from the dead, dies no more. . . . And who when he was seen here in the flesh said, "Father, I will also that they whom you have given me be with me where I am"?[24] Tractates on the Gospel of John 45.14.[25]

10:5 *Sheep Will Not Follow a Stranger*

Can You Discern the Voice of the Shepherd? Gregory of Nazianzus: He offers you a shepherd. For this is what your good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep is hoping and praying for. . . . Do you on your side offer to God and to us obedience to your pastors? Will you dwell in a place of pasture and be fed by refreshing waters,[26] knowing your Shepherd well and being known by him?[27] Will you follow when he earnestly calls you as a Shepherd through the door? Or will you follow a stranger climbing up into the fold like a robber and a traitor? Will you listen to a strange voice when that voice would take you away by stealth and scatter you from the truth on mountains,[28] and in deserts, and pitfalls, and places that the Lord does not visit? And would you be led away from the sound faith in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one power and Godhead whose voice my sheep

[15]Mt 7:7. [16]Lk 11:9. [17]ANF 4:394*; *GTDO* 43. ANF has this quote incorrectly under subsection 3. [18]NPNF 2 7:333. [19]Mt 10:16. [20]NPNF 1 14:214**. [21]NPNF 1 7:255**. [22]*JFA* 62. [23]NPNF 1 14:214**. [24]Jn 17:24. [25]NPNF 1 7:255**. [26]Ps 23:2 (22:2 LXX). [27]Jn 10:14. [28]Ezek 34:6.

always heard—and may they always hear it—to follow deceitful and corrupt words that would tear them from their true Shepherd? May we all be kept from this, both shepherd and flock. May we guide and be guided away from such a poisoned and deadly pasture so that we may all be one in Christ Jesus our Lord, now and unto our heavenly rest. On Easter and His Reluctance, Oration 1.6-7.[29]

What About the Strays? Augustine: What are we to think? Were all those who heard Christ's voice sheep? Judas heard, and he was a wolf but wore sheepskin as he followed, laying snares for the Shepherd. And sometimes some of the sheep do not hear him, as for instance those who crucified Christ. . . . Now you might say, When they did not hear, they were not yet sheep so they must have been wolves at the time; the voice, when they heard it, however, changed them from wolves into sheep. . . .

Still I am disturbed by the Lord's rebuke to the shepherds in Ezekiel, "Neither have you brought again that which strayed."[30] He calls it a stray sheep, and yet it never stops being a sheep, although if it strayed, it could not have heard the voice of the Shepherd but the voice of a stranger—the voice of the thief and robber. . . .

What I say then is this: The Lord knows those that are his.[31] He knows the foreknown, he knows the predestined.[32] . . . They are the sheep. For a time they do not even know what they are themselves, but the Shepherd knows them.[33] . . . According to this divine knowledge and predestination, how many sheep are outside, how many wolves within! And how many sheep are inside, how many wolves without! . . . But these [wolves] are not the sheep, for we speak of those who were predestined—of those whom the Lord knows are his. And yet, even these wolves, as long as they rightly obey, are still listening to the voice of Christ. In fact they are the ones who hear, the others do not. And yet, according to predestination, they are not sheep while the others are.

This is how we solve the difficulty. The sheep do hear the Shepherd's voice, and they only. When is that? It is when that voice said, "He that endures to the end shall be saved."[34] No one who is his is indifferent to such a voice; a stranger does not hear it. . . . But maybe there was someone who treated this voice with disdain and heard it as that of a stranger. If he was predestined, he strayed for the time, but he was not lost forever. He returns to hear what he has neglected, to do what he has heard. For if he is one of those who are predestined, then both his very wandering and his future conversion have been foreknown by God. If he has strayed, he will return to hear that voice of the Shepherd and follow him. Tractates on the Gospel of John 45.10-13.[35]

10:6 *They Did Not Understand the Figure*

Two Reactions to the Gospel. Augustine: Our Lord feeds by plain words, he exercises by obscure ones. . . . For when two people are listening to the words of the gospel, the one godly, the other ungodly, both can hear the words of the gospel, but it can also be the case that neither one of them understands the words. One person says, "What Jesus said is true and good, but we do not understand it." The other says, "It is not worth attending to." The first one knocks [on the door] in faith. Yes, and, if he continues to knock, it shall be opened to him. The second one, however, will hear the words in Isaiah, "If you do not believe, you shall not understand."[36] Tractates on the Gospel of John 45.6-7.[37]

[29]NPNF 2 7:204**. [30]Ezek 34:4. [31]See 2 Tim 2:19. [32]Augustine then quotes Rom 8:29-33. [33]Eph 1:4. [34]Mt 10:22. [35]NPNF 1 7:253-54**. [36]Is 7:9 LXX. [37]NPNF 1 7:251**.

The Shepherd and the Hireling John 10:7-13

Overview: Those who enter the sheepfold through the gate enter through Christ (Augustine), who is the source for those who would lead (Cyril of Alexandria) and who seek the truth (Theodore). Jesus would not have called himself the good Shepherd unless there were bad shepherds as well (Augustine). Like wolves, they take advantage of the unsophisticated (Clement). Those who are not affected by the gospel in their faith and life, and yet presume to lead others, are using the gospel and are to be considered thieves and robbers (Origen).

Christ is the door of the Father leading to unity with God (Ignatius). A shepherd's ultimate concern is always for the sheep (Gregory of Nazianzus). The apostles go in and out of the sheepfold to find pasture (Chrysostom) that leads to eternal life (Gregory of Nyssa), filling the sheep with an abundant life of faith active in love (Augustine). Thieves bring destruction; Christ delivers from destruction because he works for the good of the sheep (Theodore). He is the Shepherd of the shepherds (Augustine) who laid down his life for his sheep so that he might feed them (Gregory the Great). By sacrificing himself for his sheep he wins their love (Basil of Seleucia). Jesus is like a shepherd in sheep's clothing (Clement) who is looking for you in order to return you, his wandering sheep, to life (Gregory of Nazianzus).

Hirelings, however, leave the sheep and run away, which should be grounds not only for termination but also for garnishing their wages in compensation to their master (Tertullian). The hireling cares about pride of position more than sheep (Gregory the Great), seeking his own welfare rather than that of Christ (Augustine) and of the sheep, who are being attacked by the wolf, who is the devil. Trials will make evident who is a hireling (Gregory the Great) as the flock lives in the midst of the bitter and merciless wolves (Cyril of Alexandria). But if a minister keeps silent during a wolf's attack (Augustine) or withholds consolation from a repentant sheep, the shepherd has shirked his duty (Gregory the Great). Despite the hirelings that may be in their midst, sheep are to follow not the person but the voice of the Shepherd that may be heard even through the person who is a hireling (Augustine).

10:7 I *Am the Door of the Sheep*

Who Is the One Who Enters by the Gate? Augustine: Our Lord just said now that he was a shepherd. He also said he was a gate. . . . He is the gate in the head and the shepherd in the body. You see, he says to Peter, whom he singles out to represent his [body the] church, "Peter, do you love me?"[1] . . . as though to say, What will you

[1]Jn 21:15.

give me, what proof will you provide me with that you love me? . . . If you love me, feed my sheep; enter in by the Door and do not go up another way. . . . Who is the one who enters by the door? The one who enters by Christ. And who is that? The one who imitates Christ's passion, who understands Christ's humility, understands that while God has become man for us, he himself as a human being is not God, just a man [person]. I mean to say, anyone who wishes to play God while he is just a man is not imitating the one who, while he was God, became a man. Sermon 137.3-4.[2]

Jesus Is the Source of Leadership. Cyril of Alexandria: Jesus sees that the foolish Pharisees wanted to be rulers and that they were unwisely boastful of the name and character of leadership. And so it is good that he teaches them that he himself is the one who confers leadership in the church. And he bestows this authority without difficulty. For since Jesus is "the door" of the sacred and divine fold, he will both admit the one who is fit for leadership but also will block the entrance to the one who is unfit to lead the flock. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[3]

The Principle of Access to Truth. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He says that he is the door of the sheep because he is the principal access to truth for everyone. His doctrine that he has uniquely established calls everyone that is summoned by it. He established laws, as was his prerogative, so that we might live through them according to his will. And he was the Word through which all might know the Father. Therefore let us abandon the works of the law and apply ourselves to obey the precepts of Christ. Let us devote our entire being to the principles of the gospel and employ all diligence in fulfilling his laws. Thus, he very appropriately called himself the door of the sheep, since there is no other way to seek out the truth except by believing first of all in our Lord, and by drawing near to the entrance of truth through his commandments, finding pleasure in the good things we possess because of our nearness to God the Father. Commentary on John 4.10.7.[4]

10:8 *Those Who Came Before Are Thieves and Robbers*

"Good Shepherd" Implies "Bad Shepherds" Exist Too. Augustine: He could not have added *good* if there were not *bad* shepherds as well. They are thieves and robbers, or at best mercenaries. Tractates on the Gospel of John 46.1.[5]

Wolves Take Advantage. Clement of Alexandria: These are rapacious wolves hidden in sheepskins, human traffickers, and opportunistic soul seducers, secretly, but [later] proved to be robbers. They strive by fraud and force to catch us who are unsophisticated and have less power of speech. Stromateis 1.8.[6]

Strangers to the Gospel Cannot Proclaim It. Origen: Those who teach with a dishonest and defiled soul steal. Of them it might be said, "All who came before me are thieves and robbers." Such people use the gospel without being affected by it in faith or in living. Instead, they use the good news of the word in a way in which it was not intended. Such a person is a thief, and it will be said of him, "you who preach not to steal—you still steal."[7] Fragments on Jeremiah 21.[8]

10:9 *Jesus Is the Door*

Christ Is the Door. Ignatius of Antioch: [Christ] is the door of the Father through which Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the prophets, the apostles and the church all enter. All these enter into the unity of God. Epistle to the Philadelphians 9.[9]

[2]*WSA* 3 4:373-74**. [3]LF 48:67**. [4]CSCO 4 3:200. [5]NPNF 1 7:256**. [6]ANF 2:309*. [7]Rom 2:21. [8]FC 97:290**; GCS 6:208. [9]FC 1:116.

The Shepherd's Ultimate Concern for the Sheep. Gregory of Nazianzus: He is the Way, because he leads us through himself. He is the Door who lets us in, the Shepherd who makes us dwell in green pastures,[10] bringing us up by waters of rest and leading us there. He protects us from wild beasts, converts the erring, brings back what was lost and binds up what was broken. He guards the strong and brings them together into the fold beyond with words of pastoral knowledge. On the Son, Theological Oration 4(30).21.[11]

The Mission of the Apostles. Chrysostom: Here it is as though Jesus had said: They shall be safe and secure, that is, they shall remain within and no one shall throw them out. This is in reference to the apostles who went in and out boldly as though they had become masters of all the world. None could turn them out of their kingdom. But by "pasture," Jesus means his own nurturing and feeding of the sheep as well as his power and lordship. Homilies on the Gospel of John 59.3.[12]

Finding the Pasture That Leads to Eternal Life. Gregory of Nyssa: Where do you pasture your sheep, O good Shepherd who carries all your flock on your shoulders? For the one lamb that you took up is the entire human race, which you raised on your shoulders. Show me then the place of pasture, make known to me the waters of rest, lead me out to the good grass, call me by name that I, your sheep, may listen to your voice and may your call be the gift of eternal life. . . . "Show me, then," she says, "where you feed,"[13] so that I may find the pasture of salvation and be filled with the food of heaven which all people must eat if they would enter into life. Homilies on the Song of Songs 2.[14]

10:10 *Abundant Life*

The Life of Faith. Augustine: Therefore, he said, "I came that they may have life," that is, faith that works by love.[15] By this faith they enter the fold so that they may live, for the just lives by faith.[16] And not only may those who endure to the end have life, but "they may have it more abundantly," as they pass through this same door, that is, by the faith of Christ. For as true believers they die, and they will have life more abundantly when they come to the place where the Shepherd has preceded them—a place where they shall die no more. Although there is no want of pasture even here in the fold—for we may understand the words "and shall find pasture" as referring to both, that is, both to their going in and their going out—yet only there will they find the true pasture where they shall be filled who hunger and thirst after righteousness.[17] This is the pasture that was found by the one who heard, "Today you will be with me in paradise."[18] Tractates on the Gospel of John 45.15.[19]

10:11 *Jesus Is the Good Shepherd*

For the Good of the Sheep. Theodore of Mopsuestia: So after giving evidence derived from these facts, he said to them, "I am the good Shepherd." Therefore, if I act against the thieves, not only am I not the cause of destruction for those who obey me, but I even invite them to eternal life. And so I appear to be the Shepherd because I work for the good of the sheep. Since he asserts this decisively, he proves his argument even more so, so that he may not appear to vainly portray himself as the good Shepherd. And so, with the intention of demonstrating this with different arguments, as well as the facts themselves, he says, "The good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." If, he says, the good Shepherd is the one who accepts suffering for every affliction of his sheep, since I am going to die for the salvation of the whole world, the testimony about me is beyond doubt. "I am the good Shepherd."

[10]Ps 23:2 (22:2 LXX). [11]NPNF 2 7:317*. [12]NPNF 1 14:214**. [13]Song 1:6. [14]*FGTG* 158; PG 44:801. [15]Gal 5:6. [16]Rom 1:17. [17]Mt 5:6. [18]Lk 23:43. [19]NPNF 1 7:255**.

Indeed, if the thief kills, on the contrary, not only do I not kill, but I also give new life to men and women after taking death from them. Therefore, in every respect, I appear to be the good Shepherd according to these facts. Commentary on John 4.10.10-11.[20]

The Shepherd of the Shepherds. Augustine: Above he said that the good Shepherd entered through the door. If he is the Door, how does he enter through[21] himself? . . .

Just as he knows the Father through himself and we know the Father through him, so he enters into the fold through himself and we enter through him. Through Christ we [pastors] have a door of entrance to you; and why? Because we preach Christ and therefore enter in through the door. But Christ preaches Christ too because he preaches himself; and so the Shepherd enters in through himself. . . . He is also the door to the Father, for there is no way of approach to the Father except through him. . . . And indeed brothers and sisters, because he is the Shepherd, he has permitted his members to bear the office of shepherd. Both Peter and Paul and all the other apostles were shepherds: all good bishops are shepherds. But none of us calls himself the door. Tractates on the Gospel of John 47.1, 3.[22]

The Good Shepherd Is Good for Us. Gregory the Great: He whose goodness is his own nature and not some nonessential gift, says, "I am the good Shepherd." He adds the character of this goodness, which we are to imitate, saying, "The good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." He did what he taught; he gave an example of what he commanded. The good Shepherd has laid down his life for his sheep in order to change his body and blood into a sacrament for us and to satisfy the sheep he had redeemed with his own body as food. The way of contempt for death that we are to follow has been shown us, the mold that is to form us is there. The first thing we are to do is to devote our external goods to his sheep in mercy. Then, if it should be necessary, we are to offer even our death for these same sheep. . . . If someone does not give his substance to the sheep, how can he lay down his life for them? Forty Gospel Homilies 15.[23]

The Good Shepherd Wins the Sheep's Love. Basil of Seleucia: For the sake of his flock the shepherd was sacrificed as though he were a sheep. He did not refuse death. He did not destroy his executioners as he had the power to do, for his passion was not forced on him. He laid down his life for his sheep of his own free will. "I have the power to lay it down," he said, "and I have the power to take it up again." By his passion he made atonement for our evil passions, by his death he cured our death, by his tomb he robbed the tomb, by the nails that pierced his flesh he destroyed the foundations of hell.

Death held sway until Christ died. The grave was bitter, our prison was indestructible, until the Shepherd went down and brought to his sheep confined there the good news of their release. His appearance among them gave them a pledge of their resurrection and called them to a new life beyond the grave. "The good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep" and so seeks to win their love. Homily 26.2.[24]

Like a Shepherd in Sheep's Clothing. Clement of Alexandria: "I will be their shepherd," he says, "and I will be close to them," as clothing to their skin. He desires to save my flesh by clothing it in the robe of immortality, and he has anointed my body. "They shall call on me," he says, and I will answer, "Here I am." Lord, you have heard me more quickly than I ever hoped! "And if they pass over they shall not fall, says the Lord,"[25] meaning that we who are passing over into immortality shall not fall into corruption, for he will preserve us. He has said he would, and to

[20]CSCO 4 3:202. [21]Lat *per.* [22]NPNF 1 7:260-61**. [23]CS 123:107-8**. [24]*JFB* 54; PG 85:305-8. [25]Is 43:2.

do so is his own wish. Such is our Teacher, both good and just. He said he had not come to be served but to serve,[26] and so the Gospel shows him tired out, he who labored for our sake and promised "to give his life as ransom for many,"[27] a thing that, as he said, only the good Shepherd will do. Christ the Educator 1.9.[28]

Wandering Sheep Returned to Life. Gregory of Nazianzus: Will you think less of him . . . because to seek for what had wandered, the good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep came on the mountains and hills on which you used to sacrifice[29] and found the wanderer. And having found it, he took it upon his shoulders,[30] on which he also bore the wood. And having borne the wandering sheep, he brought it back to the life above. And having brought it back, he numbered it among those who have never strayed. On Holy Easter, Oration 45.26.[31]

10:12a *The Hireling Leaves the Sheep*

Bad Shepherds Will Be Held Accountable. Tertullian: Why, a shepherd like this would be kicked off the farm! The wages held for him until the time of his discharge would be kept from him as compensation! In fact, the master's losses would need to be compensated from this shepherd's savings.[32] On Flight in Time of Persecution 11.[33]

The Hireling Rejoices in Pride of Position. Gregory the Great: There are some who love earthly possessions more than the sheep and do not deserve the name of a shepherd. . . . He is called a hireling and not a shepherd because he does not pasture the Lord's sheep out of his deep love for them but for a temporal reward. That person is a hireling who holds the place of shepherd but does not seek to profit souls. He is eager for earthly advantages, rejoices in the honor of preferment, feeds on temporal gain and enjoys the deference offered him by other people. Forty Gospel Homilies 15.[34]

Seeking Their Own. Augustine: Who then is the hireling? There are some in office in the church, of whom the apostle Paul says, "Who seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's."[35] What does that mean, "who seek their own"? It means those who do not love Christ freely, who do not seek after God for his own sake. It means those who are pursuing temporal advantages, gaping for gain, coveting honors from people. When such things are loved by an overseer, and this is why they serve God, whoever does this is a hireling who cannot count himself among the children. For of such also the Lord says, "Truly, I say to you, they have their reward."[36] Listen to what the apostle Paul says of Timothy: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly to you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your circumstances; for I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for you. For all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's."[37] Tractates on the Gospel of John 46.5.[38]

10:12b *The Wolf Scatters the Flock*

The Devil Scatters Through Temptation. Gregory the Great: There is another wolf that ceaselessly, every day, tears apart minds, not bodies. This is the evil spirit that goes about attacking the sheepfolds of believers, seeking the death of souls. Of this wolf it is said, "And the wolf snatches and scatters the sheep." The wolf comes, and the hireling flees. The evil spirit tears apart the minds of believers in temptation, and the one holding the place of shepherd does not take responsibility. Souls are perishing, and he enjoys earthly advantages. The wolf snatches and scatters the sheep when he entices one to drunk-

[26]Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45. [27]Mt 20:28. [28]*JFA* 62-63*. [29]Jn 5:35. [30]Hos 4:13. [31]NPNF 2 7:432. See also Basil *Letter* 46.6 (NPNF 2 8:152). [32]He then cites Lk 8:18. [33]ANF 4:122**. [34]CS 123:108**. [35]Phil 2:21. [36]Mt 6:5. [37]Phil 2:19-21. [38]NPNF 1 7:257*.

enness, inflames another with greed, exalts another by pride, destroys another by anger, stirs one up by envy, trips up another by deceit. When the devil slays believers through temptations, he is like a wolf dispersing the flock. No zeal rouses the hireling against these temptations, no love excites him. He seeks only the outward advantages and carelessly allows the inward injury to his flock. Forty Gospel Homilies 15.[39]

10:13 *Hirelings Do Not Care About the Sheep*

Trials Show Who Is a Hireling. Gregory the Great: But we cannot truly know whether anyone is a shepherd or a hireling if there is no occasion to test him. During times of peace even a hireling frequently stands for the protection of the flock like a true shepherd. When the wolf comes, each one shows what his intention was as he stood as protector of the flock. Forty Gospel Homilies 15.[40]

Bitter and Merciless Wolves. Cyril of Alexandria: Humanity, having yielded to an inclination for sin, wandered away from love toward God. On this account we were banished from the sacred and divine fold, I mean the realm of paradise. Having been weakened by this calamity, we became the prey of two bitter and merciless wolves: namely, the devil who had beguiled humanity to sin; and death, which had been born from sin. But when Christ was announced as the good Shepherd over all, in the struggle with this pair of wild and terrible beasts, he laid down his life for us. He endured the cross for our sakes that by death he might destroy death. He was condemned for our sakes that he might deliver all of us from condemnation for sin, abolishing the tyranny of sin by means of faith and "nailing to his cross the bond that was against us,"[41] as it is written. Accordingly, the father of sin used to put us "in hades like sheep," delivering us over to "death as our shepherd,"[42] according to what is said in the Psalms. But the truly good Shepherd died for our sakes, that he might take us out of the dark pit of death and prepare to enfold us among the companies of heaven and give to us mansions above, even with the Father, instead of dens situated in the depths of the abyss or the recesses of the sea. Therefore Jesus says to us, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."[43] Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[44]

Silence at the Wolf's Attack. Augustine: Suppose someone has sinned—grievously sinned. He ought to be rebuked, excommunicated. However, if he is excommunicated, he will become an enemy and will plot and do as much harm as he can. And so, for the time being, the pastor who seeks his own and not what is Christ's keeps quiet and does not reprove the person so that he will not have to put up with the annoyances of their attacks or lose what he truly follows after—the advantage of human friendship. But look! The wolf has caught a sheep by the throat; the devil has enticed a believer into adultery. And yet, you are silent—you do not censure. As a hireling, you have seen the wolf coming, and you fled. Perhaps you answer and say, "See, I am here: I have not fled." You have fled[45] because you have been silent; you have been silent because you are afraid. Tractates on the Gospel of John 46.8.[46]

Withholding Consolation from the Sheep. Gregory the Great: The wolf too comes upon the sheep whenever any unrighteous person oppresses the humble believers. The one who only appears to be a shepherd leaves the sheep and flees because he is too afraid to resist the wolf's violence from fear of danger to himself. He flees not by moving to another place but by withholding consolation from his flock. The one who conceals himself beneath his silence is the one who

[39]CS 123:109*. [40]CS 123:108. [41]Col 2:14. [42]See Ps 49:14 (48:15 LXX). [43]Lk 12:32. [44]LF 48:76-77**. [45]In his *Letter* 228 (NPNF 1 1:577-78) Augustine uses this passage to discuss when it is permitted for a minister to flee during persecution. [46]NPNF 1 7:259**.

flees. . . . The hireling is inflamed with no enthusiasm to fight against this injustice. . . . The only reason that the hireling flees is because he is a hireling. A person who is in charge of the sheep, not because he loves them but because he is seeking earthly gain, cannot make a stand when the sheep are in danger. Because he esteems honor, because he enjoys his temporal advantages, he is afraid to oppose the danger for fear he should lose what he loves so much. Forty Gospel Homilies 15.[47]

Follow the Voice, Not the Hireling. Augustine: Many that seek temporal advantages in the church preach Christ, and through them Christ's voice is heard. But the sheep are not following the hireling but the voice of the Shepherd speaking through the hireling. Tractates on the Gospel of John 46.6.[48]

[47]CS 123:108-9**. [48]NPNF 1 7:258**.

THE SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP JOHN 10:14-21

Overview: The promises of the good Shepherd are already revealed in Ezekiel (Clement). Jesus is as close to his sheep as he is to his own Father (Cyril of Alexandria). His intimate knowledge of the Father makes it clear that he is of one substance with the Father (Theodore). The fact that the Son lays down his life demonstrates not only that his love is freely given (Cyril of Alexandria) but also that it is strong enough to pay the ultimate sacrifice. The Shepherd put his life in between the wolves and his flock (Chrysologus).

Jesus came not only for the Jews, who are Israel according to the flesh, but also for the other sheep of his fold, that is, the Gentiles (Theodore), who are Israel according to faith. The desire for unity among the flock means that all the shepherds should speak with the one voice of the one shepherd so that there will be one flock (Augustine).

The Father sees his own love active in his Son (Cyril of Alexandria). The Son, in turn wins his Father's love by dying for us (Chrysostom). No one took his life, but he rather demonstrates his divinity in having power to give his life (Dionysius). Christ became one of us for our salvation, and by giving his flesh over to death and then raising it, he ensured that we would share in his immortality (Athanasius). Christ's death,

however, was not a consequence of his having sin (Augustine). It is only Christ who has true power over life and death because he is God (Chrysostom). But how is it that the divine Word can lay down his life, that is, his soul (according to the Greek text [Gregory of Nyssa]) unless he is completely human as well as divine (Augustine, Theodore)? Then again, death ultimately holds no power over Christ; from his perspective, death is only sleep (Augustine). He willingly accepts the command of his Father to die for us, not out of coercion but out of love. Despite this selfless act of love, they accuse him of having a demon; his works, however, prove otherwise (Chrysostom).

10:14 *The Good Shepherd Knows His Sheep, and They Know Him*

The Promises of the Good Shepherd. Clement of Alexandria: You may learn, if you will, the profound wisdom of the most holy Shepherd and instructor, the Lord of the universe and the Word of the Father. He presents himself to us by way of allegory as the shepherd of the sheep, and so in this way serves also as the teacher of children.[1] Speaking through Ezekiel to the Jewish elders, he gives them a salutary example of true care. "I will bind up the injured and will heal the sick; I will bring back the strays and pasture them on my holy mountain."[2] These are the promises of the good Shepherd. Pasture us children like sheep, O Lord. Fill us with your own food, the food of righteousness. As our instructor, feed us on your holy mountain, the church above the clouds that touches the heavens. Christ the Educator 1.9.[3]

In Jesus, Humanity Is United to God. Cyril of Alexandria: When Jesus says, "I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father," it is equivalent to saying, I shall enter into a close relationship with my sheep, and my sheep shall be brought into a close relationship with me, according to the manner in which the Father is intimate with me, and again I also am intimate with the Father. For God the Father knows his own Son and the fruit of his [i.e., the Father's] substance because he is truly his parent. And again, the Son knows the Father, beholding him as God in truth, since he is begotten of him. In the same way, we also, being brought into a close relationship with God the Father, are called his family and are spoken of as children, according to what he himself said: "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me."[4] Truly, we are called the family of the Son, and in fact we are part of his family. Through our relationship to the Son, we are related to God the Father, because the Only Begotten, who is God of God, was made man, and though separate from all sin, he assumed our human nature. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[5]

10:15a *Mutual Knowing of Father and Son*

Mutual Knowing Implies Consubstantiality. Theodore of Mopsuestia: There is a different way of knowing. You see, I made them my own, for they are my own possession,[6]. . . and they recognize me as the master. But then he also said, "Just as the Father knows me, I, also, know the Father," as if to say, I know the sameness of the nature and of the substance of the Father, being consubstantial[7] with him, and he also knows mine. Nevertheless, I am not like the earlier teachers or like those who are teachers now, which is why I choose the danger on behalf of the sheep. Commentary on John, Fragment 76.10.14-15.[8]

10:15b *I Lay Down My Life*

[1]Gk *paedagogue*. [2]Ezek 34:14-16. [3]ANF 2:230-31**. [4]Is 8:18. [5]LF 48:83**. [6]See 2 Tim 2:19. [7]This is one of the three places where Theodore (if the Greek of his commentary is deemed reliable) demonstrates his orthodoxy by incorporating the Nicene-Constantinopolitan use of *homoousios* in his commentary. The other two are in 16:26-27 and 17:3. [8]ECS 7:81.

Christ's Love for Us Freely Given. Cyril of Alexandria: Christ did not endure death against his will on our behalf and for our sakes. Rather, we see him go toward it voluntarily, although he could easily escape the suffering if he did not want to suffer. Therefore, in his willingness even to suffer for us, we shall see the excellent quality of his love toward us and the immensity of his kindness. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[9]

The Strength of Love in a Shepherd. Peter Chrysologus: The force of love makes a person brave because genuine love counts nothing as hard, or bitter, or serious or deadly. What sword, what wounds, what penalty, what deaths can avail to overcome perfect love? Love is an impenetrable breastplate. It wards off missiles, sheds the blows of swords, taunts dangers, laughs at death. If love is present, it conquers everything.

But is that death of the shepherd advantageous to the sheep? Let us investigate. It leaves them abandoned, exposes them defenseless to the wolves, hands over the beloved flock to the gnawing jaws of beasts, gives them over to plunder and exposes them to death. All this is proved by the death of the Shepherd, Christ. From the time when he laid down his life for his sheep and permitted himself to be slain through the fury of the Jews, his sheep have been suffering invasions from the piratical Gentiles. Like prisoners to be slain in jails, they are shut up in the caves of robbers. They are torn unceasingly by persecutors who are like raging wolves. They are snapped at by heretics who are like mad dogs with savage teeth. . . .

In the light of all this, does the Shepherd prove his love for you by his death? Is he proving his love because, when he sees danger threatening his sheep, when he cannot defend his flock, he prefers to die before he sees any evil done to the sheep?

But what are we to do, since the Life himself could not die unless he had decided to? Who could have taken life away from the Giver of life if he were unwilling? . . . Therefore, he willed to die—he who permitted himself to be slain although he was unable to die. And so, let us investigate the strength and the reason of this love, the cause of this death and the utility of this passion.

Clearly, there is an established strength, a true reason, a lucid cause, a patent utility in all this blood. For unique power sprang forth from the one death of the Shepherd. For the sake of his sheep the Shepherd met the death that was threatening them. He did this that, by a new arrangement, he might, although captured himself, capture the devil, the author of death; that, although slain himself, he might punish; that, by dying for his sheep, he might open the way for them to conquer death. Sermon 40.[10]

The Good Shepherd Lays Down His Life but Does Not Lose It. Peter Chrysologus: Therefore, by giving a pattern like this, the Shepherd went before his sheep; he did not run away from them. He did not surrender the sheep to the wolves, but he consigned the wolves to the sheep. For he enabled his sheep to pick out their robbers in such a way that the sheep, although slain, should live; although mangled, should rise again and, colored by their own blood, should gleam in royal purple and shine with snow-white fleece.

In this way, when the good Shepherd laid down his life for his sheep, he did not lose it. In this way he held his sheep; he did not abandon them. Indeed, he did not forsake them but invited them. He called and led them through fields full of death and a road of death to life-giving pastures. Sermon 40.[11]

10:16 *One Flock, One Shepherd*

The Conversion of Gentiles and Jews. Theodore of Mopsuestia: This sentence alludes to those among the Gentiles who will believe, because many among the Gentiles as well as many among the Jews are destined to gather together into a single church and to acknowledge

[9]LF 48:86-87**. [10]FC 17:86-88. [11]FC 17:88.

one shepherd and one lord, who is Christ. This has indeed actually happened. But at that time the miracles confirmed the words; now the fulfillment of the words confirms the miracles accomplished then even though this did not appear at that time. Commentary on John 4.10.16.[12]

Two Israels. Augustine: So listen to this unity being even more urgently drawn to your attention: "I have other sheep," he says, "who are not of this fold." He was talking, you see, to the first sheepfold of the race of Israel according to the flesh. But there were others, of the race of the same Israel according to faith, and they were still outside, they were of the Gentiles, predestined but not yet gathered in. He knew those whom he had predestined. He knew those whom he had come to redeem by shedding his blood. He was able to see them, while they could not yet see him. He knew them, though they did not yet believe in him. "I have," he said, "other sheep that are not of this fold," because they are not of the race of Israel according to the flesh. But all the same, they will not be outside this sheepfold, because "I must bring them along too, so that there may be one flock and one shepherd." Sermon 138.5.[13]

Shepherds Should Speak with One Voice. Augustine: Let them all be in the one Shepherd and speak with the one voice of the Shepherd, which the sheep may hear and follow their shepherd, not this or that shepherd, but the one Shepherd. And in him let them all speak with one voice, not with conflicting voices. Sermon 46.30.[14]

10:17 *The Father Loves Me Because I Lay Down My Life*

The Father Sees Himself in His Son. Cyril of Alexandria: If we see ourselves in our own child, we are drawn to an intensity of love whenever we see that child. In the same way, I think God the Father is said to love his own Son, who lays down his own life for us and takes it again. For it is a work of love to have chosen to suffer—and to suffer shamefully—for the salvation of some.[15] It is a work of love not only to die but also to take again the life that was laid down in order to destroy death and to take away sorrow from corruption. Although the Son is always beloved by reason of his nature, it is evident that Christ is also beloved by God the Father because of his love toward us. Naturally, this gladdens the heart of God the Father since he can see the image of his own nature clearly and perfectly shining forth through Christ's love for us. Commentary on the Gospel of John 6.1.[16]

The Son Wins the Father's Love by Dying for Us. Chrysostom: What could be fuller of humanity than when our Lord says that he is loved because he is dying for us? Wasn't he loved before this? Is it only now that the Father begins to love him and are we the causes of that love? See how he condescends to our level. But what is he trying to prove here? They had said he was a stranger to the Father and a deceiver who had come only to ruin and destroy. And so he tells them: Even if there was nothing else that made me love you, the fact that you are loved by my Father in such a way that I win his love by dying for you—that alone is reason enough to love you. He also shows that he did not do this under compulsion. For if he did it under compulsion, how could love be the motive? And that willingness on his part was something especially known by his Father. Homilies on the Gospel of John 60.2.[17]

10:18a *No One Takes My Life*

Christ Is Divine and Human. Dionysius of Alexandria: He shows that his passion was a

[12]CSCO 4 3:204-5. [13]*WSA* 3 4:387-88; see also *Sermon* 88.10 (*WSA* 3 3:425). [14]*WSA* 3 2:283. Clement speaks of the other sheep as those worthy of another fold and mansion in heaven. See *Stromateis* 6.14. [15]See Jn 15:13. [16]LF 48:91**. [17]NPNF 1 14:217-18**.

voluntary thing; and besides that, he indicates that the life that is laid down and taken again is one thing and the divinity that lays that down and takes it again is another. Fragments 2.[18]

Only God Has Such Power. Athanasius: To be troubled was proper to the flesh, and to have power to lay down his life and take it again when he wanted was no property of people but of the Word's power. For human beings die not by their own power but by necessity of nature and against their will. But the Lord, being himself immortal but having mortal flesh, had power as God to become separate from the body and to take it again when he wanted to. Concerning this David speaks in the psalm: "You shall not leave my soul in hades, neither shall you suffer your holy One to see corruption."[19] For it was appropriate to the flesh, corruptible as it was, that it should no longer after its own nature remain mortal, but because of the Word who had put it on, it should remain incorruptible. For since he was conformed to our condition, having come in our body, so we when we receive him partake of the immortality that is from him. Discourses Against the Arians 3.29.57.[20]

10:18b *Christ's Power over His Life and Death*

Christ's Death Not a Consequence of Sin. Augustine: Here he shows that his natural death was not the consequence of sin in him but of his own simple will, which was the why, the when and the how [of his death]. For because the Word of God is so commingled [with the flesh] as to be one with it, he says, "I have power to lay it down." On the Trinity 4.13.16.[21]

Only Christ Has True Power over Life and Death. Chrysostom: Because they had often plotted to kill him, he tells them their efforts will be useless unless he is willing. . . . I have such power over my own life that no one can take it from me against my will. This power does not belong to human beings. We do not have the power of laying down our own lives unless we put ourselves to death. . . . Our Lord alone had the power to lay down his life, showing also that he was able to take it up again by that same power. Do you see how he proved from his death that his resurrection was indisputable? Homilies on the Gospel of John 60.2.[22]

How Does the Word Lay Down His Life? Augustine: How then does our Lord lay down his own life? . . . Christ is the Word and man, not man as flesh alone but as soul and flesh, so that in Christ there is a complete humanity. . . . This refutes the Apollinarians, who say that Christ did not have a human, rational soul. . . . Does the Word lay down his life and take it again; or does the human soul, or does the flesh? . . . If it was the Word of God that laid down his soul and took it again . . . that soul was at one time separated from the Word. . . . But, though death separated the soul and body, death could not separate the Word and the soul. . . . It is still more absurd to say that the soul laid down itself; if it could not be separated from the Word, how could it be separated from itself? . . . The flesh therefore lays down its life and takes it again, not by its own power but by the power of the Word. Tractates on the Gospel of John 47.9-13.[23]

Christ's Soul Separated from Body Without Change in Godhead. Gregory of Nyssa: He foretells that at the time of his passion he would voluntarily detach his soul from his body, saying, "No one takes my soul[24] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." . . . For his Godhead, alike before taking flesh and in the flesh and after his passion, is immutably the same, being at all times what it was by nature and so continuing forever. But in the suffering of his

[18]ANF 6:115*. [19]Ps 16:10 (15:10 lxx). [20]NPNF 2 4:424-25*. [21]NPNF 1 3:77**. [22]NPNF 1 14:218**. [23]NPNF 1 7:263-65**. [24]*Psychēn*.

human nature the Godhead fulfilled the dispensation for our benefit by severing the soul for a season from the body, yet without being itself separated from either of those elements to which it was once for all united. And it did so by joining again the elements that had been parted in this way so as to give to all human nature a beginning and an example that it should follow of the resurrection from the dead, that is, that all the corruptible may put on incorruption and all the mortal may put on immortality, our firstfruits having been transformed to the divine nature by its union with God. Against Eunomius 2.13.[25]

Completely Human and Divine. Theodore of Mopsuestia: To say that the body of the divine Logos also had a soul does not suggest the divinity of the soul. . . . In this context, when something like this is stated, we understand the statement to refer to the flesh, which had a soul and was united with the divine Logos. . . . After all, even when Peter says, "Now I will lay down my soul for you,"[26] just like the Lord did, there is no difference. You see, just as Peter, who was a man, composed of body and soul, said this, so too Christ, being one and not two, composed of divinity and humanity, says that he lays down his soul, which belongs to him and is part of him (although he was God in nature, assuming flesh—which had soul—and uniting it to himself).[27] Commentary on John, Fragment 78.10.18.[28]

Death Is Only Sleep to Christ. Augustine: So take a look at Christ: "I have authority to lay down my life, and I have authority to take it up again; nobody takes it away from me." "I myself went to sleep"; that, you see, is what he says in the psalm: "I myself went to sleep." As though to say, "Why are they so excited, why so exultant? Why are the Jews waving their arms with joy, as though they themselves had done anything?" "I myself went to sleep. I," he says, "who have authority to lay down my life, by laying it down 'I myself went to sleep, and took my rest.'" And since he had the authority to take it up again, he added, "I rose again," but to give the glory to the Father, "since the Lord took me up."[29] Do not let these words, where he says, "Since the Lord took me up . . ." strike your minds as meaning that Christ himself did not raise up his own body. The Father raised him up, and he also raised himself up. How shall we prove to you that he raised himself up? Call to mind what he said to the Jews: "Pull down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."[30] Sermon 305.3.[31]

10:18c *The Command from His Father*

Christ's Willing Acceptance of the Command to Die. Chrysostom: What commandment was this? It was the commandment to die for the world. Did Jesus then wait first to hear and then choose, and did he need to learn the commandment? Who (if he had any sense at all) would say something like this? But before, when he said, "Therefore my Father loves me," he showed that the first motion was voluntary and removed all suspicion of opposition to the Father. And so here when he says that he received a commandment from the Father, he declared nothing except that "what I do seems good to him." . . . For if he had needed a commandment, how could he have said, "the good Shepherd lays down his life" on his own? For he that lays his life down on his own needs no commandment. He also assigns the cause for which he does this. And what is that? That he is the shepherd, and the good Shepherd. Now the good Shepherd needs no one to arouse him to his duty. If this is the case with people, it is even more so with God. This is why

[25]NPNF 2 5:127**. See also Hilary of Poitiers *On the Trinity* 10.57-60, who furthers Gregory's argument, and Augustine *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 47.9-13. [26]Jn 13:37. [27]The insistence on the reality of the human soul of Christ and the union of the divine with the human without alteration of either is a direct attack against Apollinarianism, which taught that the divine Logos replaced Christ's human soul. This is also an important indication of Theodore's Christology, which, in this Greek fragment, if authentic, demonstrates he held to the hypostatic union that would later be enunciated at Chalcedon. [28]ECS 7:82-83*. [29]Ps 3:5 (3:6 LXX, Vg). [30]Jn 2:19, 21. [31]*WSA* 3 8:321.

Paul said that "he emptied himself."[32] So the "commandment" put here means nothing else but to show his unanimity with the Father. And, if he speaks in such a humble and human way, the cause is the infirmity of his hearers. Homilies on the Gospel of John 60.2-3.[33]

10:20 *He Has a Devil*

His Works Prove His Origin. Chrysostom: Because he spoke as one greater than human beings, they said he had a devil. . . . They had said this many times.[34] "Others said, 'These are not the words of one who has a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?'" Since they could not silence their opponents by words, they now brought proof from his works. "Certainly neither are the words those of one that has a devil, and yet if you are not persuaded by the words, be persuaded by the works." . . . Our Lord, having already given proof of who he was by his works, holds his peace because they were unworthy of an answer. . . . Indeed, as they disagreed among themselves, an answer was unnecessary. Their opposition only brought out, for our imitation, our Lord's gentleness and long suffering. Homilies on the Gospel of John 60.3.[35]

[32]Phil 2:7. [33]NPNF 1 14:218**. [34]See Jn 7:20; 8:48. [35]NPNF 1 14:218-19**.

THE UNBELIEF OF JEWISH LEADERS JOHN 10:22-30

Overview: The dedication that took place in Jerusalem was instituted by Judas Maccabeus (Bede) in celebration of the dedication of the rebuilt temple after Israel's captivity (Theodore). Christ was present at this feast, since he remained in Judea as his passion drew near (Chrysostom). Perhaps this is also why John mentions that it was winter, the mention of the present climate all the more appropriate because of the chill of unbelief in the ice-cold reception of Jesus (Augustine). Demonstrating their hostility, the Jews ask for Jesus to tell them he is the Christ; he, however, prefers actions over words (Origen) since he had already spoken plainly (Chrysostom). This shows they do not know the voice of their shepherd (Augustine).

Christ's sheep hear and obey his voice. By giving life to his followers, Christ shows that he is by nature life (Cyril of Alexandria). Eternal life is the pasture Christ said that his sheep would find (Augustine). No one can pluck Christ's sheep from his hand; the sheep, however, can choose to fall from his hands (Origen)—although Christ's hands are strong (Cyril of Alexandria), and he knows what he gave up for them in order to preserve them (Augustine). Not even ten thousand enemies can prevail in separating Christ's sheep from their shepherd (Theodore of Mopsuestia). Christ received his sheep at his nativity along with the shepherds who were there (Hilary). When he adds here that no one will snatch them out of his Father's hand he appeals both to the hand (Augustine) and to the Father as two sources of strength and power that will keep the sheep safe (Theodore).

The only appropriate expression for the unity between Father and Son is "God" (Origen). When Christ says, "I and the Father are one," these are words that can be true of no other human being. He here distinguishes the person of Father and Son while maintaining their unity (Novatian), which he also does when he says "I and the Father *are* one" instead of saying "*am* one" (Novatian, Hippolytus, Augustine). The unity of the Godhead also is an indicator of the unity of the church (Cyprian). It is not singularity of number but unity of essence (Tertullian). Christ becomes like a second shepherd without becoming second in rank to the Father. Rather, in his divinity he is equal to the Father while, by his incarnation, he is subject to the Father (Augustine). The Father and Son share one essence (Cyril of Alexandria) as they are one in essence not in relation (Augustine). The Son is one with the Father according to *ousia,* not according to hypostasis (Theodore of Heraclea). Such unity is the ground of unanimity (Hilary).

10:22 *The Festival of the Dedication*

Dedication Instituted by Judas Maccabeus. Bede: The first dedication of the temple was by Solomon in the autumn; the second was by Zerubbabel and the priest Jeshua around that same time of year; a third dedication was conducted by Judas Maccabeus during the winter time when he instituted an annual commemoration of the dedication and cleansing of the temple by the priests.[1] Exposition on the Gospel of John 10.22.[2]

The Festival of the Dedication. Theodore of Mopsuestia: This means the dedication of Jerusalem itself—not because the city was established at that time, but because the city had been destroyed often by the enemies. In the end it was devastated by Antiochus, and after the enemies had been driven away by the Maccabees, the city regained its ancient appearance with the help of God. And so, every year they celebrated the day in which they had won, in memory of the victory obtained beyond any hope; and they called it the "Enkainia"[3] of Jerusalem. Then, since all people had gathered on that day of celebration, Jesus walked in the temple, in the portico named after Solomon. Commentary on John 4.10.22-23.[4]

10:23 *It Was Winter*

The Winter Before Christ's Passion. Chrysostom: This feast was a great and national one. They celebrated with great enthusiasm the day on which the temple was rebuilt upon the return from their long captivity in Persia. At this feast Christ also was present, since from this time forward he continually lived in Judea because the passion was near. Homilies on the Gospel of John 61.1.[5]

The Winter of Discontent before Christ's Passion. Augustine: "It was winter," and they were chilled because they were slow

[1]That is, after the defilement by Lysias. See 1 Macc 4:41ff. [2]PL 92:770. [3]Enkaenia is a term still used today for commemoration, for instance, at universities. [4]CSCO 4 3:211. [5]NPNF 1 14:222*.

to approach that divine fire. For to approach is to believe: the one who believes, approaches; the one who denies, moves away. The soul is not moved by the feet but by the affections. They had become icy cold to the sweetness of loving him, and they burned with the desire of doing him an injury. They were far away, while there beside him. Tractates on the Gospel of John 48.3.[6]

10:24-26 *Tell Us If You Are the Christ*

Jesus Preferred Acts over Words. Origen: And since he avoided unnecessary talk about himself and preferred to show by acts rather than words that he was the Christ, the Jews for that reason said to him, "If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Against Celsus 1.48.[7]

Christ Already Had Spoken Plainly. Chrysostom: Their mode of questioning was full of hatred when they say, "Tell us plainly, are you the Christ?" And yet, he was always at their feasts and had said nothing in secret at those feasts, speaking everything out in the open. They preface their remarks, however, with flattery: "How long do you make us to doubt?" They say this as if they were anxious to know the truth, but they really only meant to provoke him to say something that they might latch on to. Homilies on the Gospel of John 61.1.[8]

10:27 *My Sheep Hear and Follow Me*

The Voice of the Shepherd. Augustine: What is the voice of the shepherd? "And that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name throughout all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."[9] There is the voice of the shepherd. Recognize it and follow if you are a sheep. Sermon 46.32.[10]

Humanity Mystically United to Christ If They Obey. Cyril of Alexandria: The mark of Christ's sheep is their willingness to hear and obey, just as disobedience is the mark of those who are not his. We take the word *hear* to imply obedience to what has been said. People who hear God are known by him. No one is entirely unknown by God, but to be known in this way is to become part of his family. Therefore, when Christ says, "I know mine," he means I will receive them and give them a permanent mystical relationship with myself.

It might be said that inasmuch as he has become man, he has made all human beings his relatives, since all are members of the same race. We are all united to Christ in a mystical relationship because of his incarnation. Yet those who do not preserve the likeness of his holiness are alienated from him. . . . "My sheep follow me," says Christ. By a certain God-given grace, believers follow in the footsteps of Christ. No longer subject to the shadows of the law, they obey the commands of Christ and guided by his words rise through grace to his own dignity, for they are called "children of God."[11] When Christ ascends into heaven, they also follow him. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.1.[12]

10:28 *Eternal Life*

Christ, Who Is Life, Gives Life. Cyril of Alexandria: Christ promises his followers eternal life as a compensation and reward. They receive exemption from death and corruption and from the torments the judge inflicts upon transgressors. By giving life, Christ shows that by nature he *is* life. He does not receive it from another but supplies it from his own resources. And by eternal life we understand not only length of days which all, both good and bad, shall possess after the resurrection but also the passing of those days in bliss.

It is also possible to understand by "life" a reference to the mystical blessing [of the Eucharist] by which Christ implants in us his own life through the participation of his own flesh by the

[6]NPNF 1 7:266*. [7]ANF 4:417. [8]NPNF 1 14:223**. [9]Lk 24:47. [10]*WSA* 3 2:284-85. [11]Mt 5:9. [12]LF 48:99-100**.

faithful, according to the text, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life." Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.1[13]

The Pasture of Eternal Life. Augustine: This is the pasture of which he spoke before when he said, "And he shall go in and out and find pasture."[14] . . . The good pasture is called eternal life. The grass there does not wither, and everywhere it is green and flourishing. . . . But you are only looking to misrepresent my words because you only think about this present life. When he says, then, "and they shall not perish," you can hear the undertone of what was said, as if he had said to them: you shall perish eternally because you are not of my sheep. Tractates on the Gospel of John 48.5-6.[15]

We Can Fall from His Hands. Origen: For "no one snatches us away from his hands," according to what was said in the Gospel according to John. Yet it is not written that just as no one snatches us away, no one also falls from his hands. For one who is self-determined is free. And, I say, no one will snatch us away from the hand of God, no one can take us. But we are able to fall from his hands if we are negligent. Homilies on Jeremiah 18.3.[16]

The Great Might of Christ's Hand. Cyril of Alexandria: The faithful also have the help of Christ, and the devil is not able to snatch them. Those who have an endless enjoyment of good things remain in Christ's hand, no one thereafter snatching them away from the bliss that is given to them. [No one can throw them] into punishment or torments. For it is not possible that those who are in Christ's hand should be snatched away to be punished because of the great might Christ has. For "the hand" in the divine Scripture signifies "the power." It cannot be doubted therefore that the hand of Christ is unconquerable and mighty to all things. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.1.[17]

Christ Knows What He Gave Up for Them. Augustine: But of those sheep of which the apostle says, "The Lord knows those that are his"[18] . . . there is none that the wolf seizes, or the thief steals or the robber kills. Christ is confident of their number since he knows what he gave up for them. It is for this reason that he says, "No one shall pluck them out of my hand." Tractates on the Gospel of John 48.6.[19]

Not Even Ten Thousand Enemies Will Prevail. Theodore of Mopsuestia: Even though there are many deceivers, [Jesus says], "No one will snatch them out of my hand." It is impossible—even in the face of ten thousand enemies—that someone stronger than me may snatch them from my hands. And this is the difference between you and my [followers]: you do not believe after you heard my words and saw my miracles, while they, even though they may suffer ten thousand afflictions, will never recede from my presence. For this reason they will receive the reward due to their good will, namely, eternal life, because, he said, "No one will snatch them out of my hand," that is, they cannot separate them from me. Commentary on John 4.10.28-29.[20]

10:29 *The Father Has Given the Sheep to Christ*

He Received Us at His Birth. Hilary of Poitiers: This is the speech of conscious power—this confession of free and irresistible energy that will allow no one to pluck his sheep from his hand. But more than this, not only does he have the nature of God but he would have us know that that nature is his by birth from God, and so he adds, "That which the Father has given me is greater than all." He does not conceal that his birth is from the Father, for what he received from the Father he says is greater than all. He

[13]LF 48:100**. [14]Jn 10:9. [15]NPNF 1 7:267**. [16]FC 97:192-93; GCS 6:154. [17]LF 48:101**. [18]2 Tim 2:19. [19]NPNF 1 7:267**. [20]CSCO 4 3:213.

received it in that he was born from him. He received it in the birth itself, not after it, and yet it came to him from Another, for he received it.[21] On the Trinity 7.22.[22]

The Hand Is the Seat of Power. Augustine: The Son, born from everlasting of the Father, God from God, does not have equality with the Father by growth but by birth. But the Father is not God from the Son; the Son is God from the Father. Therefore in begetting the Son, the Father "gave" him to be God, in begetting he gave him to be coeternal with himself, in begetting he gave him to be his equal. This is that which is "greater than all." . . . That which the Father gave him, that is, to be his Word, to be his only begotten Son, to be the brightness of his light. This is what is "greater than all." This is why no one is able to take his sheep out of his hand, any more than from his Father's hand. . . . If by hand we understand power, the power of the Father and the Son is one, even as their Godhead is one. . . . If we understand the Son as the hand of the Father, we must think so not in a bodily sense, as if God the Father had limbs, but as the Son being he by whom all things were made.[23] People often call other people "hands" when they make use of them for any purpose. And sometimes a person's work is itself called his hand, because it is made by his hand, as when someone is said to know his own hand when he recognizes his own handwriting. . . . In this place, however, "hand" signifies the power of the Father and the Son. Otherwise, if we think that "hand" refers to the Son, we shall be in danger of imagining that if the Father has a hand who is his Son, so then Christ must also have a hand that is his son too. Tractates on the Gospel of John 48.6-7.[24]

Christ Appeals to Father's Power. Theodore of Mopsuestia: He referred the cause of it all to the Father, in order to confirm his words as indisputable to the unbelievers. And since what he had said could appear to be quite weak, that is, "no one will snatch them out of my hand," for this reason he introduced the power of the Father and his outstanding greatness by saying, "no one can snatch them out of the Father's hand," because all are absolutely inferior to him. Commentary on John 4.10.28-29.[25]

10:30 *Christ and the Father Are One*

Christ's Unity with God. Origen: Our Savior and Lord in his relation to the Father and God of the universe is not one flesh or one spirit but something higher than flesh and spirit, namely, one God. The appropriate word when human beings are joined to one another is flesh. The appropriate word when a righteous person is joined to Christ is spirit. But the word when Christ is united to the Father is not flesh or spirit but more honorable than these—God. This then is the sense in which we should understand "I and the Father are one." Dialogue with Heraclides 3-4.[26]

One with the Father. Novatian: This word can be true of no human being, "I and the Father are one." Christ alone declared this word out of the consciousness of his divinity. On the Trinity 13.[27]

Persons Distinguished, Unity Maintained. Novatian: But since they[28] frequently urge on us the passage where it is said, "I and the Father are one," in this also we shall overcome them with equal facility. For if, as the heretics think, Christ were the Father, he ought to have said, "I, the Father, am one." But when he says I and afterwards introduces the Father by saying, "I and the Father," he severs and distinguishes the peculiarity of his, that is, the Son's person, from the paternal authority, not only in

[21]He is not unbegotten. [22]NPNF 2 9:127**. [23]This is similar to Irenaeus's understanding of the Son and the Spirit as the two hands of God. [24]NPNF 1 7:267-68**. [25]CSCO 4 3:213. [26]*DECT* 25; SC 67:60. [27]ANF 5:622. [28]The Patripassians, who taught that the Father suffered on the cross.

respect of the sound of the name but moreover in respect of the order of the distribution of power, since he might have said, "I the Father," if he had had it in mind that he himself was the Father. And since he said "one" thing, let the heretics understand that he did not say "one" person. For "one," placed in the neuter, intimates association, not personal unity. He is said to be one neuter, not one masculine, because the expression is not referred to the number, but it is declared with reference to the association of another. Finally, he adds, and says, "We are," not "I am," so as to show, by the fact of his saying "I and the Father are," that they are two persons. Moreover, that he says one, has reference to the agreement, and to the identity of judgment and to the loving association itself, as reasonably the Father and Son are one in agreement, in love and in affection. And because he is of the Father, whatsoever he is, he is the Son. The distinction, however, remains that he is not the Father who is the Son, because he is not the Son who is the Father. For he would not have added "we are" if he had had it in mind that he, the only and sole Father, had become the Son. On the Trinity 27.[29]

"Are One" Versus "Am One." Hippolytus: And if he [i.e., Noetus] were to say, "Jesus himself said, 'I and the Father are one,'" let him [Noetus] apply his mind to the matter and learn that Jesus did not say, "I and the Father am one" but "are one." "We are" is not said with reference to one but with reference to two. He revealed two persons but a single Power. Against Noetus 7.1.[30]

"One" and "Are." Augustine: Mark both of those words, *one*[31] and *are*,[32] and you will be delivered from Charybdis and from Scylla.[33] In these two words, in that he said *one*, he delivers you from Arius;[34] in that he said *are*, he delivers you from Sabellius;[35] . . . there are both Father and Son. . . . And if *one*, then there is no difference of persons between them. Tractates on the Gospel of John 36.9.[36]

Unity of Godhead, Unity of Church. Cyprian: The Lord says, "I and the Father are one." And again of the Father and Son and the Holy Spirit it is written, "And these three are one."[37] Does anyone believe that this unity that comes from divine strength, which is closely connected with the divine sacraments, can be broken asunder in the church and be separated by the division of colliding wills? The Unity of the Church 6.[38]

Not Singularity of Number but Unity of Essence. Tertullian: "[W]e are one *thing*,"[39] not "one person."[40] For if he had said "one person," he might have rendered some assistance to their opinion. *Unus*, no doubt, indicates the singular number; but [here we have a case where] "two" are still the subject in the masculine gender. He accordingly says *unum*, a neuter term, which does not imply singularity of number but unity of essence, likeness, conjunction, affection on the Father's part, who loves the Son, and submission on the Son's part, who obeys the Father's will. Against Praxeas 22.[41]

Father, Son and Spirit Are One. Augustine: And when God was feeding them, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit was feeding them. Now he is raised up and becomes like a second shepherd. But he is not a second one. Not a second one in the form of God, because in the form of God he and the Father are one God. But in the form of a servant he is raised up to feed them like a second one, because the Father is

---

[29]ANF 5:637. [30]HM 2:60. [31]Lat *unum*. [32]Lat *sumus*. [33]In Greek mythology, Scylla was a sea monster who lived under a dangerous rock at one side of the Strait of Messia, opposite the whirlpool Charybdis. [34]Arius made the Son into a creature and did not consider him God. [35]Sabellius said the Son was just another mode of the Father's existence, thus having no existence as a separate person in the Trinity. [36]NPNF 1 7:212*. [37]1 Jn 5:7 (KJV). Cyprian seems to be quoting the so-called *Comma Johanneum* text of 1 Jn 5:7 that has an explicit reference to the Trinity. See Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8* (Tempe, Ariz.: Comma Publications, 1995), 38, although Daniel Wallace disagrees with Maynard's conclusions. See his article on the web, *The Comma Johanneum and Cyprian*. [38]FC 36:101. [39]Lat *unum*. [40]Lat *unus*. [41]ANF 3:618.

greater. Listen to one feeding them, and Christ feeding them: "I and the Father are one." Sermon 47.20.[42]

Divine Equality, Incarnate Subjection. Augustine: In his divinity he is equal to the Father; by his incarnation he is subject to the Father. Sermon 371.2.[43]

Father and Son Share One Essence. Cyril of Alexandria: We say the Son and the Father "are one," not to blend their individuality by the use of that number, as some do who say that the Father and the Son are the same [person]. Rather, we believe that the Father and the Son are two unique persons, and we regard the two together in one identical essence, knowing that they possess one might, so that this divine essence is seen without variation in both. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.1.[44]

One in Essence, Not Relation. Augustine: [We must understand] that the Father is not anything in respect to his own substance. We must also understand that what is said about him—that he is the Father and his very existence as Father—is all said in relation to the Son. How then can the Son be of the same essence as the Father, seeing that the Father—in respect to himself—is neither his own essence, nor does he exist at all in respect to himself? Rather, even his very essence exists in relation to the Son. But this establishes even more the fact that [the Son] is of one and the same essence [with the Father], since the Father and Son must be of one and the same essence, seeing that the Father has being itself—not in respect to himself, but to the Son. This is the essence he begot, and the essence by which he is whatever he is. Therefore neither [person] exists in respect to himself alone. And both exist in relationship to one another. On the Trinity 7.1.2.[45]

One According to *Ousia*. Theodore of Heraclea: One, he says of himself, with the Father according to *ousia*, not according to *hypostasis*, and he is equal with the Father in all things. For he is to be counted as two according to *hypostases*, both himself and the Father, who, he said is greater than he. Fragments in John 126.[46]

Unity Is the Ground of Unanimity. Hilary of Poitiers: Now seeing that the heretics cannot get around these words because they are so clearly stated and understood, they nevertheless try to explain them away. They maintain that the words "I and the Father are one" refer to a mere union of unanimity only; a unity of will, not of nature, that is, that the two are one not by essence of being but by identity of will.[47] . . . They make use of the example of our own union with God, as though we were united to the Son and through the Son to the Father by mere obedience and a devout will and not through the true communion of our nature [with his] that is promised to us through the sacrament of the body and blood. . . .

But it is not through any mysterious appointment of God that they are one, but through the birth of the nature, for God loses nothing in begetting the Son from himself. They are one, for the sheep not plucked out of the Son's hand are not plucked out of the hand of the Father . . . . The Father works in the Son's works, for the Son himself is in the Father and the Father is in him.[48] This proceeds from no creation but from birth. It is not brought about by will but by power. It is not an agreement of mind that speaks but nature that does so. For to be created and to be born are not one and the same any more than to will and to be able are the same; neither is it the same thing to agree and to abide.

Thus we do not deny the unanimity between the Father and the Son—for heretics falsely say that since we do not accept the concord by itself

[42]*WSA* 3 2:314. [43]*WSA* 3 10:313. [44]LF 48:102**. [45]NPNF 1 3:105**. [46]*JKGK* 99. [47]The heretics, according to Hilary, cite Acts 4:32; 1 Cor 3:8. [48]See Jn 14:7-12.

as the bond of unity we declare the Father and the Son to be in disagreement. We do not deny such a unanimity, [but the unanimity results from the unity].[49] The Father and the Son are one in nature, honor, power, and the same nature cannot will contrary things. On the Trinity 8.5, 17-19.[50]

[49]See Hilary's argument, *On the Trinity* 8.9-12. [50]NPNF 2 9:139, 142**.

THE CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY JOHN 10:31-42

Overview: In reply to their charges, Jesus tells them he has done any number of works that clearly demonstrates he does not deserve to be stoned (Tertullian). Despite this fact, however, they have no knowledge of Christ's divine nature; all they saw was his human nature (Theodoret). The Jews, however, end up being unwitting witnesses to the Son's equality with the Father in what they say (Augustine). In effect, the Arians and the Jews agree that Christ claimed to be God (Hilary), and Christ does not deny that they understood him correctly (Cyril of Alexandria).

Christ speaks of those in the Old Testament who were called "gods," but they and we become such only through participation with the Word (Athanasius), who is the only true God. He says that they are accusing the one whom the Father sanctified. The fact that he was sanctified, however, should not cause us undue concern as if there were a time when he was not holy (Augustine). He does not confirm their charge of blasphemy, but he does confirm their assertion that he claims to be God (Novatian). In appealing to the law, which called mere humans "gods," Christ showed how much more this title was worthy of him (Hilary). Since they could not see his substance (*ousia*), Christ directs them to his works (Chrysostom). The Father is in the Son by means of his works (Tertullian), which prove his divinity and his equality with the Father

(Athanasius, Hilary). Unlike we who, while dwelling in the Father, are not equal with the Father, the Son is in the Father as an equal is in an equal (Augustine).

After this discourse, Christ crosses the Jordan. He shows as in a type how he is going over to the church of the Gentiles, which possesses the fountains of baptism (Cyril of Alexandria). Jesus chooses the Jordan as a point of departure also to remind them of John the Baptist's validation of his ministry (Chrysostom).

10:31-32 *For Which Good Work Will They Stone Him?*

Jesus Did Not Deserve to Die for His Works. Tertullian: When he says, "I and my Father are one" in essence *[unum]*, he shows that there are two, whom he puts on an equality and unites in one. He therefore adds to this very statement, that he had "shown them many good works from the Father," for none of which did he deserve to be stoned. Against Praxeas 22.[1]

10:33 *For Blasphemy We Stone You*

No Knowledge of the Invisible Nature. Theodoret of Cyr: But since they did not know the divine nature, they crucified [what they saw as] the human nature. Or didn't you hear them say, "We are not stoning you because of a good work but because of blasphemy, since you, who are a man, make yourself God." Through these words they show that they recognized the nature that they saw but had absolutely no knowledge of the invisible nature. If they had known that nature, however, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."[2] Dialogue 3.[3]

Jews as Hostile Witnesses to Son's Equality with Father. Augustine: This is how the Jews reply to his words, "I and my Father are one." See how the Jews understood what the Arians do not. The reason they are angry is that they could not conceive of Jesus' words, "I and my Father are one," in any other way but that he meant the equality of the Father and the Son. Tractates on the Gospel of John 48.8.[4]

Arians and Jews Agree. Hilary of Poitiers: The Jew says, "You being a man"; you [Arians] say, "You being a creature." You both join in the cry, "You make yourself God," with the same insolence of blasphemy. You deny that he is God begotten of God; you deny that he is the Son by a true birth; you deny that his words "I and the Father are one" contain the assertion of one and the same nature in both. You foist upon us instead a modern, strange, alien god. You make him God of another kind from the Father, or else not God at all, as not subsisting by a birth from God. . . . You say, in effect, "You are not a Son by birth; you are not God in truth; you are a creature excelling all other creatures." On the Trinity 7.23-24.[5]

Christ Does Not Contradict the Jews' Understanding. Cyril of Alexandria: For indeed the Jews understood that in saying this, he said that he himself was God and equal to the Father. And Christ did not deny that he had said this as they understood it. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.1.[6]

10:35 *Those to Whom the Word of God Came*

Christ Is God By Nature. Athanasius: Christ was not man [first], and then became God. Rather, he was [first] God, and then he became man, and that to deify us.[7] When he became man, he was called Son and God, but before he became man, God had called the ancient people sons. In fact, he made Moses a god to Pharaoh, and Scripture says of many, "God stands in the congregation of gods."[8] Since this is so, it is plain

[1]ANF 3:618. [2]1 Cor 2:8. [3]FC 106:220. [4]NPNF 1 7:268**. [5]NPNF 2 9:128**. [6]LF 48:102. [7]See *On the Incarnation* 54. [8]Ps 82:1 (81:1 LXX); RSV: "God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment."

that he is called Son and God later than they are. How then are all things through him, and how is he before everything? Or, how is he "firstborn of the whole creation"[9] if he has others before him who are called sons and gods? And how is it that those first partakers[10] do not partake of the Word?

This opinion is not true; it is a device of our present Judaizers. For how in that case can any at all know God as their Father? For there can be no adoption apart from the real Son, who says, "No one knows the Father except the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."[11] And how can there be deifying apart from the Word and before him? And yet, he says to their brothers the Jews, "If he called them gods, to whom the Word of God came." And if all who are called sons and gods, whether in earth or in heaven, were adopted and deified through the Word, and the Son himself is the Word, it is plain that they all exist through him, and he himself is before all. Or rather, he himself is the only true Son, and he alone is very God from the very God, not receiving these prerogatives as a reward for his virtue or being another beside them, but being all these by nature and according to essence. For he is offspring of the Father's essence, so that one cannot doubt that after the resemblance of the unalterable Father, the Word also is unalterable. Discourses Against the Arians 1.11.39.[12]

Made "Gods" by Participation in the True God. Augustine: If the word of God came to people, that they might be called gods, how can the very Word of God, who is with God, be other than God? If by the word of God people become gods, if by participation they become gods, can he in whom they participate not be God? If lights that are lit are gods, is the light that enlightens not God? If through being warmed in a way by saving fire they are constituted gods, is he who gives them the warmth other than God? You approach the light and are enlightened and numbered among the children of God. If you withdraw from the light, you fall into obscurity and are counted as being in darkness; but that light does not approach because it never recedes from itself. If, then, the word of God makes you gods, how can the Word of God be other than God? Tractates on the Gospel of John 48.9.[13]

10:36 *The One Whom the Father Sanctified*

The Father Sanctified the Son in the Same Way as He Begat Him. Augustine: Perhaps someone may be saying, If the Father sanctified him, was there then a time when he was not sanctified? He sanctified in the same way as he begat him. For in the act of begetting he gave him the power to be holy, because he begat him in holiness. For if that which is sanctified was unholy before, how can we say to God the Father, "Hallowed be thy name"?[14] Tractates on the Gospel of John 48.9.[15]

Jesus Uses Accusation to Affirm His Divinity. Novatian: The Jews thought that what he had said was . . . hateful and blasphemous, for he had shown himself in these discourses to be God. Therefore they rushed at once to stoning and set to work passionately to hurl stones. He, however, strongly refuted his adversaries by the example and witness of the Scriptures. "If," said he, "he called them gods to whom the words of God were given, and the Scripture cannot be broken, you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into this world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, I am the Son of God." With these words, he did not deny that he was God, but rather he confirmed the assertion that

[9]Col 1:15, see also *Oration* 2.62. [10]In this passage Athanasius considers that the participation of the Word is deification, as communion with the Son is adoption. He also implies that the people of the Old Testament, inasmuch as they are called "gods" and "sons," did partake of the divine Word and Son, or in other words were gifted with the Spirit. He asserts the same doctrine very strongly in *Oration* 4.22. But in *Oration* 4:47 he says expressly that Christ received the Spirit in baptism "that he might give it to man." There is no real contradiction in such statements; what was given in one way under the Law was given in another and fuller way under the gospel. [11]Mt 11:27. [12]NPNF 2 4:329**. [13]NPNF 1 7:269*. [14]Mt 6:9. [15]NPNF 1 7:269**.

he was God. For because undoubtedly they are said to be gods to whom the words of God were given, much more is he God who is found to be superior to all these. And nevertheless he refuted the calumny of blasphemy in a fitting manner with lawful tact. For his desire is to be understood to be God as the Son of God, not wanting to be understood as the Father. Thus he said that he was sent and showed them that he had manifested many good works from the Father that further demonstrates that he wanted to be understood as the Son and not the Father. And in the latter portion of his defense he made mention of the Son, not the Father when he said, "You say, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God.'" Thus, as far as pertains to the guilt of blasphemy, he calls himself the Son, not the Father; but as pertaining to his divinity, by saying, "I and the Father are one," he proved that he was the Son of God. He is God, therefore, but God in such a manner as to be the Son, not the Father. On the Trinity 15.[16]

The Law Called Mere Humans "Gods." Hilary of Poitiers: He begins by exposing the absurdity, as well as the insolence, of such a charge as that of making himself God, though he was only a man. The law had conferred the title on holy people. The word of God, from which there is no appeal, had given its sanction to the public use of the name. What blasphemy, then, could there be in the assumption of the title of Son of God by him whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world? . . . The law gives the name of *gods* to those who are confessedly mortals. And so, if other people may use this name without blasphemy, there can obviously be no blasphemy in its use by *the* man whom the Father has sanctified. Also, note here that throughout this argument he calls himself *man,* for the Son of God is also Son of man. He excels above the rest who, nonetheless, are guilty of no irreverence in styling themselves gods. He excels above them in that he has been hallowed to be the Son, as the blessed Paul says, who teaches us of this sanctification.[17] . . . And so, the accusation of blasphemy against him in making himself *God* falls to the ground. For the Word of God has conferred this name on many people; and he who was sanctified and sent by the Father did no more than proclaim himself the Son of God. On the Trinity 7.24.[18]

10:37 *Doing the Works of His Father*

His Works Prove His Equality. Chrysostom: We should consider this as a speech of humility made to conciliate people. But afterwards he leads them to higher things: "If I am not doing the works of my Father, do not believe me." . . . See how he proves that he is not inferior to the Father. Since they could not see his substance, he directs them to his works, as being similar and equal to the Father's. The equality of their works proved the equality of their power. Homilies on the Gospel of John 61.2.[19]

10:38 *Believe the Works*

The Father Is in and with the Son by His Works. Tertullian: It must therefore be by the works that the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; and so it is by the works that we understand that the Father is one with the Son. All along he therefore strenuously aimed at this conclusion, that while they were of one power and essence, they should still be believed to be two. For otherwise, unless they were believed to be two, the Son could not possibly be believed to have any existence at all. Against Praxeas 22.[20]

Works Prove Jesus' Divinity. Athanasius: By the works he did in the body [he] showed himself to be not man but God the Word. But these things are said about him because the actual body that ate, was born and suffered belonged to none other but the Lord. And he had become a

[16]ANF 5:625. [17]See Rom 1:2-4. [18]NPNF 2 9:128-29*. [19]NPNF 1 14:224**. [20]ANF 3:618.

man; it was proper for these things to be predicated of him as a man in order to show that he really had a body, and not just one in appearance. But just as from these things he was known to be bodily present, so from the works he did in the body he made himself known to be the Son of God. . . . For just as, though invisible, he is known through the works of creation; so, having become man and being in the body unseen, it may be known from his works that he who can do these is not man but the power and Word of God. On the Incarnation 18.1-3.[21]

The Works Are Not His Own but the Father's. Hilary of Poitiers: What room is there here for adoption, or for permission to use the name or for denial that he was born from the nature of God when the proof that he is God's Son is that he does the works that belong to the Father's nature? No creature is equal or similar to God, no nature external to his is comparable in might to him. It is only the Son, born from himself, whom we can without blasphemy liken and make equal to him. . . . The Son performs the Father's works and on that ground demands that we should believe that he is God's Son. This is no claim of mere arrogance; for he bases it on his works and asks us to examine them. And he bears witness that these works are not his own but his Father's. He would not have our thoughts distracted by the splendor of the deeds from the evidence for his birth. And because the Jews could not penetrate the mystery of the body that he had taken, the humanity born of Mary, and recognize the Son of God, he appeals to his deeds for confirmation of his right to the name. . . . First, he would not have them believe that he is the Son of God, except on the evidence of God's works, which he does. Next, if he does the works yet seems unworthy in his bodily humility to bear the divine name, he demands that they believe the works. Why should the mystery of his human birth hinder our recognition of his birth as God when he that is divinely born fulfills every divine task by the agency of that manhood that he has assumed? If we do not believe the man for the works' sake when he tells us that he is the Son of God, let us believe the works when they—which are beyond a doubt the works of God—are clearly done by the Son of God. For the Son of God possesses by virtue of his birth everything that is God's. Therefore the Son's work is the Father's work because his birth has not excluded him from that nature that is his source and in which he abides, and because he has in himself that nature to which he owes his eternal existence. On the Trinity 7.26.[22]

An Equal in an Equal. Augustine: The Son does not say, "The Father is in me, and I in him," in the sense in which we say it. For if our thinking is in line with him, then we are in God. And if we live the way he wants us to, then God is in us. Believers, by participating in his grace and being illuminated by him, are said to be in him and he in us. But this is not how it is with the only begotten Son. He is in the Father, and the Father is in him as one who is equal is in him whose equal he is. In short, we can sometimes say, "We are in God, and God is in us," but can we say I and God are one? You are in God because God contains you. God is in you because you have become the temple of God. . . . Recognize the prerogative of the Lord and the privilege of the servant. The prerogative of the Lord is equality with the Father; the privilege of the servant is fellowship with the Savior. Tractates on the Gospel of John 48.10.[23]

10:40 *Jesus Goes Where John First Baptized*

Baptismal Waters of the Jordan. Cyril of Alexandria: Leaving Jerusalem, the Savior seeks a refuge in a place with springs of water so that he might signify obscurely, as in a type, how he would leave Judea and go over to the church of the Gentiles, which possesses the fountains of baptism and where many approach him crossing

[21]NPNF 2 4:46. [22]NPNF 2 9:129-30*. [23]NPNF 1 7:269*.

through the Jordan. This is signified by Christ taking up his abode "beyond" the Jordan. Having crossed the Jordan by holy baptism, they are brought to God, for truly Christ went across from the synagogue of the Jews to the Gentiles and then "many came to him and believed" the words that the saints spoke concerning Christ. Commentary on the Gospel of John 7.1.[24]

10:41-42 *Many Believe Because of the Signs*

The Wisdom of Divine Teaching. Chrysostom: When he has spoken anything great and sublime, he quickly retires, giving way to their anger so that the passion may abate and cease through his absence. And thus he acted at that time. But why does the Evangelist mention the place? That you may learn that he went there to remind them of the things that had been done there and said by John, and of his testimony. At least when they came there, they immediately remembered John. Therefore also they said, "John indeed did no miracle," since how did it follow that they should add this unless the place had brought the Baptist to their memory, and they had come to remember his testimony? And observe how they form incontrovertible syllogisms: "John indeed did no miracle," "but this man does," someone says and "so his superiority is shown. If therefore people believed in the one who did no miracles, how much more must they believe this man?" Then, since it was John who bore the witness—in case his having done no miracle might seem to prove him unworthy of being a witness—they added, "Yet if he did no miracle, still everything he said about this man was true." And so, Christ is no longer proven to be trustworthy by means of John. Instead, John is shown to be trustworthy by what Christ had done. Homilies on the Gospel of John 61.3.[25]

---

[24]LF 48:109**. [25]NPNF 1 14:224-25**.

Appendix
Early Christian Writers and the Documents Cited

The following table lists all the early Christian documents cited in this volume by author, if known, or by the title of the work. The English title used in this commentary is followed in parentheses with the Latin designation and, where available, the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (=TLG) digital references or Cetedoc Clavis numbers. Printed sources of original language versions may be found in the bibliography of works in original languages.

Abraham of Nathpar
On Prayer and Silence

Ambrose

Concerning Repentance *(De paenitentia)*	Cetedoc 0156
Concerning Virgins *(De virginibus)*	Cetedoc 0145
Flight from the World *(De fuga saeculi)*	Cetedoc 0133
Isaac, or the Soul *(De Isaac vel anima)*	Cetedoc 0128
Jacob and the Happy Life *(De Jacob et vita beata)*	Cetedoc 0130
Joseph *(De Joseph)*	Cetedoc 0131
Letters *(Epistulae)*	Cetedoc 0160
On Paradise *(De paradiso)*	Cetedoc 0124
On the Christian Faith *(De fide)*	Cetedoc 0150
On the Holy Spirit *(De spiritu sancto)*	Cetedoc 0151
On the Mysteries *(De mysteriis)*	Cetedoc 0155
On the Patriarchs *(De patriarchis)*	Cetedoc 0132
On the Sacrament of the Incarnation of our Lord *(De incarnationis dominicae sacramento)*	Cetedoc 0152
Six Days of Creation *(Exameron)*	Cetedoc 0123
The Prayer of Job and David *(De interpellatione Job et David)*	Cetedoc 0134

Ammonius

Fragments on John *(Fragmenta in Joannem)*	TLG 2724.003

Amphilochius of Iconium

Oration 9 *(In illud: Non potest filius a se facere)*	TLG 2112.010

Andrew of Crete
Homily on the Exaltation of the Venerable Cross *(In exaltationem venerandae cruces)*

Apollinaris of Laodicea
Fragments on John *(Fragmenta in Joannem)* TLG 2074.038

Athanasius
Discourses Against the Arians *(Orationes tres contra Arianos)* TLG 2035.042
Festal Letters *(Epistulae festalis)*
History of the Arians *(Historia Arianorum)* TLG 2035.009
On the Incarnation *(De incarnatione verbi)* TLG 2035.002

Augustine
Christian Combat *(De agone christiano)* Cetedoc 0296
Christian Instruction *(De doctrina Christiana)* Cetedoc 0263
City of God *(De civitate Dei)* Cetedoc 0313
Confessions *(Confessionum libri tredecim)* Cetedoc 0251
Enchiridion *(Enchiridion de fide, spe et caritate)* Cetedoc 0295
Explanations of the Psalms *(Enarrationes in Psalmos)* Cetedoc 0283
Harmony of the Gospels *(De consensu evangelistarum libri iv)* Cetedoc 0273
Letters *(Epistulae)* Cetedoc 0262
On Adulterous Marriages *(De adulterinis coniugiis)* Cetedoc 0302
On Eighty-three Varied Questions *(De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus)* Cetedoc 0289
On Faith and the Creed *(De fide et symbolo)* Cetedoc 0293
On Free Will *(De libero arbitrio)* Cetedoc 0260
On Nature and Grace *(De natura et gratia)* Cetedoc 0344
On Rebuke and Grace *(De correptione et gratia)* Cetedoc 0353
On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and on Infant Baptism
(De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum) Cetedoc 0342
On the Trinity *(De trinitate)* Cetedoc 0329
Predestination of the Saints *(De praedestinatione sanctorum)* Cetedoc 0354
Sermons *(Sermones)* Cetedoc 0284
Tractates on the Gospel of John *(In Johannis evangelium tractatus)* Cetedoc 0278

Basil of Seleucia
Homily *(Sermones)* TLG 2080.002

Basil the Great
Concerning Baptism *(De baptismo libri duo)* TLG 2040.052
Homily, In the Beginning Was the Word *(In illud: In principio erat verbum)* TLG 2040.032
Homily on Christ's Ancestry *(In sanctam Christi generationem)* TLG 2040.059
Letters *(Epistulae)* TLG 2040.004
On the Spirit *(De spiritu sancto)* TLG 2040.003

Bede
Commentary on Matthew *(In Matthaei evangelium expositio)*
Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles *(In epistulam septem catholicas)* Cetedoc 1362
Exposition on the Gospel of John *(In S. Joannis evangelium exposition)*

Exposition on the Gospel of Mark *(In Marci evangelium expositio)* Cetedoc 1355
Homilies on the Gospels *(Homiliarum evangelii libri ii)* Cetedoc 1367

Caesarius of Arles
Sermons *(Sermones)* Cetedoc 1008

Chromatius of Aquileia
Sermons *(Sermones)* Cetedoc 0217+(M)

Clement of Alexandria
Christ the Educator *(Paedagogus)* TLG 0555.002
Exhortation to the Greeks *(Protrepticus)* TLG 0555.001
Stromateis *(Stromata)* TLG 0555.004

Constitutions of the Holy Apostles *(Constitutiones apostolorum)* TLG 2894.001

Cosmas of Maiuma
Kanon for the Fifth Day of Great Week, Ninth Ode *(Hymni 6, Pro Magna Quinta Feria)*

Cyprian
Letters *(Epistulae)* Cetedoc 0050
The Good of Patience *(De bono patientiae)* Cetedoc 0048
The Unity of the Church *(De ecclesiae catholicae unitate)* Cetedoc 0041

Cyril of Alexandria
Commentary on the Gospel of John *(Commentarii in Joannem)* TLG 4090.002
Letters *(Epistulae* in *Concilium universale Ephesenum anno)* TLG 5000.001
Meditation on the Mystical Supper *(In mysticam coenam [et pedum lavationem in sancta Quinta])*

Cyril of Jerusalem
Catechetical Lectures *(Catecheses ad illuminandos)* TLG 2110.003
Mystagogical Lectures *(Mystagogiae [sp.])* TLG 2110.002

Didache *(Didache xii apostolorum)* TLG 1311.001

Didymus the Blind
Commentary on Ecclesiastes *(Commentarii in Ecclesiasten)* TLG 2102.007
Fragments on John *(Fragmenta in Joannem)* TLG 2102.025

Dionysius of Alexandria
Fragments *(Fragmenta)*

Ephrem the Syrian
Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron *(In Tatiani Diatessaron)*
Hymns on the Nativity *(Hymni de nativitate)*

Hymns on Virginity *(Hymni de virginitate)*
Memra for the Fifth Day of Great Week *(Sermones in Hebdomadam Sanctam)*

Eusebius of Caesarea
Ecclesiastical History *(Historia ecclesiastica)* TLG 2018.002
Proof of the Gospel *(Demonstratio evangelica)* TLG 2018.005

Evagrius of Pontus
Chapters on Prayer *(De oratione)* TLG 4110.024

Gregory of Nazianzus
Against the Arians and on Himself, Oration 33
(Contra Arianos et de seipso) TLG 2022.041
In Defense of His Flight to Pontus, Oration 2 *(Apologetica)* TLG 2022.016
On Easter and His Reluctance, Oration 1
(In sanctum pascha et in tarditatem) TLG 2022.015
On His Father's Silence, Oration 16 *(In patrem tacentem)* TLG 2022.029
On Holy Baptism, Oration 40 *(In sanctum baptisma)* TLG 2022.048
On Holy Easter, Oration 45 *(In sanctum pascha)* TLG 2022.052
On the Holy Lights, Oration 39 *(In sancta lumina)* TLG 2022.047
On the Holy Spirit, Theological Oration 5 (31) *(De spiritu sancto)* TLG 2022.011
On the Son, Theological Oration 3 (29), *(De filio)* TLG 2022.009
On the Son, Theological Oration 4 (30), *(De filio)* TLG 2022.010
On the Words of the Gospel, "When Jesus Had Finished These Sayings,"
Oration 37 *(In dictum evangelii: Cum donsummasset Jesus hos sermons)* TLG 2022.045
Poems *(Carmina dogmatica)* TLG 2022.059

Gregory of Nyssa
Against Eunomius *(Contra Eunomium)* TLG 2017.030
(Refutatio confessionis Eunomii) TLG 2017.031
Homilies on the Song of Songs *(In Canticum canticorum)* TLG 2017.032
On Virginity *(De virginitate)* TLG 2017.043

Gregory the Great
Forty Gospel Homilies *(Homiliarum xl in evangelica)* Cetedoc 1711
Homilies on Ezekiel *(Homiliae in Hiezechihelem prophetam)* Cetedoc 1710
Letters *(Registrum epistularum)* Cetedoc 1714
Morals on the Book of Job *(Moralia in Job)* Cetedoc 1708

Heracleon (via Origen)
Commentary on John *(Commentarii in evangelium Joannis)* TLG 2042.005

Hilary of Poitiers
Commentary on Matthew *(In evangelium Matthaei commentarius)*
Homilies on the Psalms *(Tractatus super psalmos I-XCI)* Cetedoc 0428

On the Councils *(Liber de synodis, seu de fide orientalium)*
On the Trinity *(De trinitate)* Cetedoc 0433

Hippolytus
Against Noetus *(Contra haeresin Noeti)* TLG 2115.002

Ignatius of Antioch
Epistle to the Ephesians *(Epistulae vii genuinae)* TLG 1443.001
Epistle to the Philadelphians *(Epistulae vii genuinae)* TLG 1443.001
Epistle to the Romans *(Epistulae vii genuinae)* TLG 1443.001

Irenaeus
Against Heresies *(Adversus haereses)* Cetedoc 1154

Isaac of Nineveh
Ascetical Homilies *(De perfectione religiosa)*

Isaiah of Scete
On Guarding the Intellect *(Orationes)*

Jerome
Against John of Jerusalem *(Contra Johannem Hierosolymitanum)* Cetedoc 0612
Against the Pelagians *(Dialogi contra Pelagianos libri iii)* Cetedoc 0615
Homilies on John *(Homilia in Johannem evangelistam)* Cetedoc 0597
Letters *(Epistulae)* Cetedoc 0620

John Chrysostom
Homilies on the Gospel of John *(In Joannem [homiliae 1-88])* TLG 2062.153

John of Damascus
Orthodox Faith *(Expositio fidei)* TLG 2934.004

Justin Martyr
Dialogue with Trypho *(Dialogus cum Tryphone)* TLG 0645.003
First Apology *(Apologia)* TLG 0645.001

Lactantius
Divine Institutes *(Divinae Institutiones)* Cetedoc 0085
Epitome of the Divine Institutes *(Epitome divinarum institutionum)* Cetedoc 0086

Leo the Great
Sermons *(Tractatus septem et nonaginta)* Cetedoc 1657

Maximus of Turin
Sermons *(Collectio sermonum antiqua)* Cetedoc 0219a

Maximus the Confessor
Chapters on Knowledge *(Diversa capita ad theologiam et oeconomiam spectantia)*
Questions to Thalassium *(Quaestiones ad Thalassium)* TLG 1892.001

Melito of Sardis
On Pascha *(De pascha)* TLG 1495.001

Methodius
Extracts from the Work on Things Created *(Ex libro de creatis excerpta)*

Novatian
On the Trinity *(De trinitate)* Cetedoc 0071

Origen
Against Celsus *(Contra Celsum)* TLG 2042.001
Commentary on Matthew *(Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei [lib. 10-11])* TLG 2042.029
Commentary on the Gospel of John
(Commentarii in evangelium Joannis [lib. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 13]) TLG 2042.005
(Commentarii in evangelium Joannis [lib. 19, 20, 28, 32]) TLG 2042.079
Dialogue with Heraclides *(Dialogus cum Heraclide)* TLG 2042.018
Fragments on Jeremiah *(Fragmenta in Jeremiam* [in catenis]) TLG 2042.010
Fragments on the Gospel of John *(Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis [in catenis])* TLG 2042.006
Homilies on Jeremiah *(In Jeremiam [homiliae 12-20])* TLG 2042.021
Homilies on Numbers *(In Numeros homiliae)* Cetedoc 0198
Letter to Gregory *(Epistula ad Gregorium Thaumaturgum)* TLG 2042.033
On First Principles *(De principiis)* TLG 2042.002

Peter Chrysologus
Sermons *(Collectio sermonum)* Cetedoc 0227+

Philoxenus of Mabbug
On the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Prudentius
Hymns for Every Day *(Liber Cathemerinon)* Cetedoc 1438

Pseudo-Athanasius
Fourth Discourse Against the Arians *(Oratio quarta contra Arianos)* TLG 2035.117

Pseudo-Dionysius
Celestial Hierarchy *(De caelesti hierarchia)* TLG 2798.001

Romanus Melodus
Kontakia *(Cantica)* TLG 2881.001

Sahdona
Book of Perfection

Tertullian

Against Marcion *(Adversus Marcionem)*	Cetedoc 0014
Against Praxeas *(Adversus Praxean)*	Cetedoc 0026
On Baptism *(De baptismo)*	Cetedoc 0008
On Flight in Time of Persecution *(De fuga in persecutione)*	Cetedoc 0025
On Prayer *(De oratione)*	Cetedoc 0007
On the Dress of Women *(De cultu feminarum)*	Cetedoc 0011
On the Flesh of Christ *(De carne Christi)*	Cetedoc 0018
On the Resurrection of the Flesh *(De resurrectione mortuorum)*	Cetedoc 0019
Prescriptions Against Heretics *(De praescriptione haereticorum)*	Cetedoc 0005

Theodore of Heraclea
Fragments on John *(Fragmenta graeca)*
(Fragmenta in Johannem)

Theodore of Mopsuestia
Commentary on John *(Commentarius in evangelium Johannis Apostoli)*

Theodoret of Cyr

Compendium of Heretical Myths *(Haereticarum fabularum compendium)*	TLG 4089.031
Dialogues *(Eranistes)*	TLG 4089.002

Biographical Sketches & Short Descriptions of Select Anonymous Works

This listing is cumulative, including all the authors and works cited in this series.

Abba John (date unknown). Noted monk in John Cassian's *Conferences* who presided over a coenobitic community in the desert of Scetis and was sought out for his wisdom.

Abba Moses (c. 332-407). Moses the Ethiopian or Moses the Black. He began as a house slave of a government official, later dismissed for robbery, a life he continued after his dismissal. After his conversion, he became a monk of Scetis and then a priest trained by Isidore the Priest. He retired to Petra where he was martyred with seven others by barbarian invaders.

Abba Pior (d. 373). An Egyptian desert father. He left his family while still a boy. His sister sought him out fifty years later, trying to persuade him to return from his life of solitude, but she was unsuccessful. He was known as a generous monk who was willing to put up with much discomfort, living in a horrible cell that no one who followed after him could stand to live in.

Abraham of Nathpar (fl. sixth-seventh century). Monk of the Eastern Church who flourished during the monastic revival of the sixth to seventh century. Among his works is a treatise on prayer and silence that speaks of the importance of prayer becoming embodied through action in the one who prays. His work has also been associated with John of Apamea or Philoxenus of Mabbug.

Acacius of Beroea (c. 340-c. 436). Syrian monk known for his ascetic life. He became bishop of Beroea in 378, participated in the council of Constantinople in 381, and played an important role in mediating between Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch; however, he did not take part in the clash between Cyril and Nestorius.

Acacius of Caesarea (d. c. 365). Pro-Arian bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, disciple and biographer of Eusebius of Caesarea, the historian. He was a man of great learning and authored a treatise on Ecclesiastes.

Acts of Paul and Thecla (second century). A story about a disciple of Paul known for her continence and miraculous deliverances from martyrdom. Originally a part of *The Acts of Paul*, the work was judged a forgery by Tertullian who opposed its use in the advocacy of

female preaching and baptizing. Nonetheless, the work was widely popular and translated into several languages.
Acts of Peter (c. 190). An apocryphal account of the apostle's life and ministry, including his conflicts with Simon Magus and his death via inverted crucifixion.
Acts of Thomas (c. 225). A widely circulated apocryphal account of the missionary and wonderworking activities of Thomas, which includes the earliest report of the apostle's martyrdom in India.
Adamantius (early fourth century). Surname of Origen of Alexandria and the main character in the dialogue contained in *Concerning Right Faith in God*. Rufinus attributes this work to Origen. However, trinitarian terminology, coupled with references to Methodius and allusions to the fourth-century Constantinian era bring this attribution into question.
Adamnan (c. 624-704). Abbot of Iona, Ireland, and author of the life of St. Columba. He was influential in the process of assimilating the Celtic church into Roman liturgy and church order. He also wrote *On the Holy Sites*, which influenced Bede.
Alexander of Alexandria (fl. 312-328). Bishop of Alexandria and predecessor of Athanasius, on whom he exerted considerable theological influence during the rise of Arianism. Alexander excommunicated Arius, whom he had appointed to the parish of Baucalis, in 319. His teaching regarding the eternal generation and divine substantial union of the Son with the Father was eventually confirmed at the Council of Nicaea (325).
Ambrose of Milan (c. 333-397; fl. 374-397). Bishop of Milan and teacher of Augustine who defended the divinity of the Holy Spirit and the perpetual virginity of Mary.
Ambrosiaster (fl. c. 366-384). Name given to the author of an anonymous Pauline commentary once thought to have been composed by Ambrose.
Ammonas (fourth century). Student of Antony the Great and member of a colony of anchorite monks at Pispir in Egypt. He took over leadership of the colony upon Antony's death in 356. He was consecrated by Athanasius as bishop of a small unknown see. He died by 396. Fourteen letters and eleven sayings in the Apophthegmata Patrum are attributed to him, although it is unlikely that all of the identified sayings are his.
Ammonius of Alexandria (late fifth-early sixth century). Alexandrian presbyter who was one of the more moderate anti-Chalcedonian theologians of Alexandria and served as a prominent representative of Alexandrian theology and Christology in his day. His exegetical method, however, exhibits more affinity with Antioch than Alexandria. Fragments from his commentary on John number over 600, and he is often identified as the author of catena fragments from commentaries on both the Old and New Testament (see PG 85:1362-1814), though, due to the prevalence of this name in Egypt and the existence of other possible authors, attribution remains uncertain.
Amphilochius of Iconium (b. c. 340-345; d. c. 398-404). An orator at Constantinople before becoming bishop of Iconium in 373. He was a cousin of Gregory of Nazianzus and active in debates against the Macedonians and Messalians.
Anastasius I of Antioch (d. 598/599). Patriarch of Antioch (559-570 and 593-598), exiled by Justinian II and restored by Gregory the Great. His writing significantly influenced later theologians, though only his five-part treatise on orthodox belief survives in its entirety.
Anastasius of Sinai (d. c. 700). Abbot of the monastery of St. Catherine. He argued against various heresies in his dogmatic and polemical works. His main treatise, the *Hodegos* or "Guide," is primarily an attack on monophysism.
Andreas (c. seventh century). Monk who

collected commentary from earlier writers to form a catena on various biblical books.
Andrew of Caesarea (early sixth century). Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. He produced one of the earliest Greek commentaries on Revelation and defended the divine inspiration of its author.
Andrew of Crete (c. 660-740). Bishop of Crete, known for his hymns, especially for his "canons," a genre which supplanted the *kontakia* and is believed to have originated with him. A significant number of his canons and sermons have survived and some are still in use in the Eastern Church. In the early Iconoclastic controversy he is also known for his defense of the veneration of icons.
Antony (or Anthony) the Great (c. 251-c. 356). An anchorite of the Egyptian desert and founder of Egyptian monasticism. Athanasius regarded him as the ideal of monastic life, and he has become a model for Christian hagiography.
Aphrahat (c. 270-350; fl. 337-345). "The Persian Sage" and first major Syriac writer whose work survives. He is also known by his Greek name Aphraates.
Apollinaris of Laodicea (310-c. 392). Bishop of Laodicea who was attacked by Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa and Theodore for denying that Christ had a human mind.
Aponius/Apponius (fourth-fifth century). Author of a remarkable commentary on Song of Solomon (c. 405-415), an important work in the history of exegesis. The work, which was influenced by the commentaries of Origen and Pseudo-Hippolytus, is of theological significance, especially in the area of Christology.
Apostolic Constitutions (c. 381-394). Also known as *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* and thought to be redacted by Julian of Neapolis. The work is divided into eight books, and is primarily a collection of and expansion on previous works such as the *Didache* (c. 140) and the *Apostolic Traditions*. Book 8 ends with eighty-five canons from various sources and is elsewhere known as the *Apostolic Canons.*
Apringius of Beja (mid sixth century). Iberian bishop and exegete. Heavily influenced by Tyconius, he wrote a commentary on Revelation in Latin, of which two large fragments survive.
Arator (c. 490-550). Roman subdeacon appointed by Pope Vigilius. From Liguria, Italy, he served as an imperial ambassador for the Gothic court prior to his appointment as subdeacon. A poet at heart, his *De actibus apostolorum*, a poetic paraphrase and allegorical expansion of the book of Acts, was popular in the Middle Ages.
Arethas of Caesarea (c. 860-940). Byzantine scholar and disciple of Photius. He was a deacon in Constantinople, then archbishop of Caesarea from 901.
Aristides (second century). Christian philosopher and early apologist. Reputed to be from Athens, he wrote his *Apologia*, addressed either to Hadrian or Antoninus Pius, to defend the Christian understanding of God against that of the barbarian, Greek and Jewish traditions.
Arius (fl. c. 320). Heretic condemned at the Council of Nicaea (325) for refusing to accept that the Son was not a creature but was God by nature like the Father.
Armenian Liturgy (c. fourth or fifth century). Ancient Christian liturgy based in part on Syrian rites used by early missionaries to Armenia and similar in structure to the old rite of Antioch. The Armenian liturgy also incorporates unique elements and influences from a variety of traditions. The invention of a national script in the fifth century allowed for the translation of the liturgy into Armenian.
Arnobius of Sicca (d. c. 327). Teacher of rhetoric at Sicca Veneria in Numidia in North Africa and opponent of Christianity, he converted late in life and became an apologist for the faith he formerly opposed. According to Jerome, Arnobius's one extant work, *Against the Nations*, was written at the request of his bishop, who wanted proof that his conversion was genuine. It was probably composed during

the persecution under Diocletian.
Arnobius the Younger (fifth century). A participant in christological controversies of the fifth century. He composed *Conflictus cum Serapione*, an account of a debate with a monophysite monk in which he attempts to demonstrate harmony between Roman and Alexandrian theology. Some scholars attribute to him a few more works, such as *Commentaries on Psalms*.
Asterius the Homilist (late fourth-early fifth century). Author of thirty-one homilies on Psalms 1–15 and 18, abbreviated versions of which are preserved under the name of John Chrysostom. This otherwise unknown preacher, sometimes identified with Asterius of Amasea and Asterius the Sophist, lived in or near Antioch.
Athanasian Creed (c. fourth or fifth century). One of the three ecumenical creeds in Western Christianity. Also known as the *Quicumque vult*, it expounds in great detail the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation. Traditionally attributed to Athanasius, the creed's origin and date are now disputed; it likely arose in Southern Gaul.
Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 295-373; fl. 325-373). Bishop of Alexandria from 328, though often in exile. He wrote his classic polemics against the Arians while most of the eastern bishops were against him.
Athenagoras (fl. 176-180). Early Christian philosopher and apologist from Athens, whose only authenticated writing, *A Plea Regarding Christians*, is addressed to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, and defends Christians from the common accusations of atheism, incest and cannibalism.
Augustine of Hippo (354-430). Bishop of Hippo and a voluminous writer on philosophical, exegetical, theological and ecclesiological topics. He formulated the Western doctrines of predestination and original sin in his writings against the Pelagians.
Babai (c. early sixth century). Author of the *Letter to Cyriacus*. He should not be confused with either Babai of Nisibis (d. 484) or Babai the Great (d. 628).
Babai the Great (d. 628). Syriac monk who founded a monastery and school in his region of Beth Zabday and later served as third superior at the Great Convent of Mount Izla during a period of crisis in the Nestorian church.
Bardesanes (154-222). Philosopher who sought to reconcile Christian thought with contemporary astrological theories, while rejecting Zoroastrian determinism. His ideas, including arguments against the Marcionites, were recorded by a disciple in the *Book of the Laws of the Lands*. He also wrote 150 doctrinal hymns.
Barsanuphius and John (fifth to sixth century). Two anchorite friends who served as spiritual directors to coenobites at a monastery near Gaza. The two communicated with others, including one another, almost exclusively through letters. Little is known of them apart from their correspondence, included among 850 letters of Barsanuphius. Dorotheus of Gaza was one of Barsanuphius's most important disciples.
Basil of Seleucia (fl. 444-468). Bishop of Seleucia in Isauria and ecclesiastical writer. He took part in the Synod of Constantinople in 448 for the condemnation of the Eutychian errors and the deposition of their great champion, Dioscurus of Alexandria.
Basil the Great (b. c. 330; fl. 357-379). One of the Cappadocian fathers, bishop of Caesarea and champion of the teaching on the Trinity propounded at Nicaea in 325. He was a great administrator and founded a monastic rule.
Basilides (fl. second century). Alexandrian heretic of the early second century who is said to have believed that souls migrate from body to body and that we do not sin if we lie to protect the body from martyrdom.
Bede the Venerable (c. 672/673-735). Born in Northumbria, at the age of seven he was put under the care of the Benedictine monks

of Saints Peter and Paul at Jarrow and given a broad classical education in the monastic tradition. Considered one of the most learned men of his age, he is the author of *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People*.

Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-547). Considered the most important figure in the history of Western monasticism. Benedict founded many monasteries, the most notable found at Montecassino, but his lasting influence lay in his famous Rule. The Rule outlines the theological and inspirational foundation of the monastic ideal while also legislating the shape and organization of the cenobitic life.

Besa the Copt (fifth century). Coptic monk, disciple of Shenoute, whom he succeeded as head of the monastery. He wrote numerous letters, monastic catecheses and a biography of Shenoute.

Book of Steps (c. 400). Written by an anonymous Syriac author, this work consists of thirty homilies or discourses which specifically deal with the more advanced stages of growth in the spiritual life.

Braulio of Saragossa (c. 585-651). Bishop of Saragossa (631-651) and noted writer of the Visigothic renaissance. His *Life* of St. Aemilianus is his crowning literary achievement.

Byzantine Order. Eastern rite incorporating diverse local traditions from throughout the empire. Byzantine liturgy, which fused into a more standard order in the late Middle Ages, is marked by a variety of rich cultural influences, especially lyrical and mystical elements.

Caesarius of Arles (c. 470-543). Bishop of Arles renowned for his attention to his pastoral duties. Among his surviving works the most important is a collection of 238 sermons that display an ability to preach Christian doctrine to a variety of audiences.

Callinicus (mid fifth century). Disciple and biographer of Hypatius, third abbot of the monastery at Rufiniane near Chalcedon and Constantinople. Callinicus's *Life of Hypatius* shows clear borrowings from Athanasius's *Life of Antony*, but nevertheless gives insight into the development of monastic life near Constantinople.

Callistus of Rome (d. 222). Pope (217-222) who excommunicated Sabellius for heresy. It is very probable that he suffered martyrdom.

Cassia (b. c. 805; d. between 848 and 867). Nun, poet and hymnographer who founded a convent in Constantinople.

Cassian, John (360-432). Author of the *Institutes* and the *Conferences*, works purporting to relay the teachings of the Egyptian monastic fathers on the nature of the spiritual life which were highly influential in the development of Western monasticism.

Cassiodorus (c. 485-c. 580). Founder of the monastery of Vivarium, Calabria, where monks transcribed classic sacred and profane texts, in Greek and Latin, preserving them for the Western tradition.

Chromatius (fl. 400). Bishop of Aquileia, friend of Rufinus and Jerome and author of tracts and sermons.

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215). A highly educated Christian convert from paganism, head of the catechetical school in Alexandria and pioneer of Christian scholarship. His major works, Protrepticus, Paedagogus and the Stromata, bring Christian doctrine face to face with the ideas and achievements of his time.

Clement of Rome (fl. c. 92-101). Pope whose *Epistle to the Corinthians* is one of the most important documents of subapostolic times.

Commodian (probably third or possibly fifth century). Latin poet of unknown origin (possibly Africa, Syria, Rome or Gaul) whose two surviving works suggest chiliast and patripassionist tendencies.

Constantine (d. 337). Roman emperor from 306, with his fellow-emperor Licinius. The two proclaimed religious tolerance in the *Edict of Milan* in 313, allowing Christianity to be practiced freely. He became sole emperor in 324 and sought to preserve the unity and structure of the church for the good of

the state. Constantine issued decrees against schisms and summoned the Council of Nicaea (325) to settle the Arian controversy.

Constitutions of the Holy Apostles. *See* Apostolic Constitutions.

Cosmas of Maiuma (c. 675-c. 751). Adopted son of John of Damascus and educated by the monk Cosmas in the early eighth century. He entered the monastery of St. Sabas near Jerusalem and in 735 became bishop of Maiuma near Gaza. Cosmas in his capacity as Melodus ("Songwriter") is known for his canons composed in honor of Christian feasts. An alternate rendering of his name is Kosmas Melodos.

Council of Chalcedon (451). The fourth of seven ecumenical councils. The council was summoned by Emperor Marcian in response to a controversy over the person and nature of Christ. The Definition of Chalcedon, informed by Leo's *Tome*, affirmed the statements of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) while further defining the relationship between the two natures in the one person of Christ as unmixed, unchangeable, indivisible and inseparable. The Oriental Orthodox Church refused to accept Chalcedon's definition of the faith, preferring to stay with the *miaphysite* Christology of Cyril of Alexandria.

Council of Constantinople (381). The second ecumenical council, convened by Theodosius I to unify the Eastern Church. The council endorsed the Nicene Creed of 325, expanding it at certain controverted points in order to answer to challenges from, among others, the Eunomians and Pneumatomachians who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit, while also condemning the Apollinarian denial of Christ's full humanity.

Council of Rome (382). Called by Damasus in response to the Council of Constantinople, this gathering affirmed the Council of Constantinople while also seeking to establish the primacy of the Roman see. The first three chapters of the *Decretum Gelasianum*, which list a hierarchy of authoritative sources and a biblical canon, may have been produced by this council.

Council of Toledo (447). Affirmed the earlier Council of Toledo I (400) and the liturgical practice already established in the West of including the procession of the Spirit from the Father *and the Son (filioque)*, which had been added to the recitation of the creed by some in the West in order to combat the heresy of Arianism which subordinated the Son to the Father.

Cyprian of Carthage (fl. 248-258). Martyred bishop of Carthage who maintained that those baptized by schismatics and heretics had no share in the blessings of the church.

Cyril of Alexandria (375-444; fl. 412-444). Patriarch of Alexandria whose extensive exegesis, characterized especially by a strong espousal of the unity of Christ, led to the condemnation of Nestorius in 431.

Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-386; fl. c. 348). Bishop of Jerusalem after 350 and author of Catechetical Homilies.

Cyril of Scythopolis (b. c. 525; d. after 557). Palestinian monk and author of biographies of famous Palestinian monks. Because of him we have precise knowledge of monastic life in the fifth and sixth centuries and a description of the Origenist crisis and its suppression in the mid-sixth century.

Damasus of Rome (c. 304-384). Appointed pope in 366, following a conflict with Ursinus settled by Valentinian I. Damasus solidified the authority of Rome, attacked heresy using councils and strategic partnerships, promoted the cult of the martyrs, and commissioned Jerome's production of the Vulgate.

Dhuoda (ninth century). Wife of Bernard, Duke of Septimania, and author of a work on Christian virtue, *Manual*, which she wrote for her eldest son, William.

Diadochus of Photice (c. 400-474). Antimonophysite bishop of Epirus Vetus whose work *Discourse on the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus*

Christ exerted influence in both the East and West through its Chalcedonian Christology. He is also the subject of the mystical *Vision of St. Diadochus Bishop of Photice in Epirus.*

Didache (c. 140). Of unknown authorship, this text intertwines Jewish ethics with Christian liturgical practice to form a whole discourse on the "way of life." It exerted an enormous amount of influence in the patristic period and was especially used in the training of catechumen.

Didascalia Apostolorum (Teaching of the Twelve Apostles and Holy Disciples of Our Savior) (early third century). A Church Order composed for a community of Christian converts from paganism in the northern part of Syria. This work forms the main source of the first six books of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and provides an important window to view what early liturgical practice may have looked like.

Didymus the Blind (c. 313-398). Alexandrian exegete who was much influenced by Origen and admired by Jerome.

Diodore of Tarsus (d. c. 394). Bishop of Tarsus and Antiochene theologian. He authored a great scope of exegetical, doctrinal and apologetic works, which come to us mostly in fragments because of his condemnation as the predecessor of Nestorianism. Diodore was a teacher of John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

Dionysius of Alexandria (d. c. 264). Bishop of Alexandria and student of Origen. Dionysius actively engaged in the theological disputes of his day, opposed Sabellianism, defended himself against accusations of tritheism and wrote the earliest extant Christian refutation of Epicureanism. His writings have survived mainly in extracts preserved by other early Christian authors.

Dorotheus of Gaza (fl. c. 525-540). Member of Abbot Seridos's monastery and later leader of a monastery where he wrote *Spiritual Instructions.* He also wrote a work on traditions of Palestinian monasticism.

Dracontius (fifth century). Latin poet and legal scholar. During imprisonment (484-c. 496) for angering the ruler of Carthage, Dracontius produced his *Satisfactio* and *Laudes Dei,* which explore, in particular, biblical themes of mercy.

Egeria (or Etheria, Aetheria) (fourth century). Possible name for the author of an *Itinerary* or pilgrimage diary that records valuable details on early liturgy, traditions, and church and monastic structure. Through letters to her religious community, likely in Gaul, Egeria describes a journey (c. 381-384) to Egypt, Palestine and Asia Minor.

Ennodius (474-521). Bishop of Pavia, a prolific writer of various genre, including letters, poems and biographies. He sought reconciliation in the schism between Rome and Acacius of Constantinople, and also upheld papal autonomy in the face of challenges from secular authorities.

Ephrem the Syrian (b. c. 306; fl. 363-373). Syrian writer of commentaries and devotional hymns which are sometimes regarded as the greatest specimens of Christian poetry prior to Dante.

Epiphanius of Salamis (c. 315-403). Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, author of a refutation of eighty heresies (the *Panarion*) and instrumental in the condemnation of Origen.

Epiphanius the Latin. Author of the late fifth-century or early sixth-century Latin text *Interpretation of the Gospels,* with constant references to early patristic commentators. He was possibly a bishop of Benevento or Seville.

Epistle of Barnabas. See *Letter of Barnabas.*

Epistula Apostolorum (mid second century). A self-purported letter of doubtful authenticity from the apostles to the churches of the world that emphasizes the divinity and sonship of Jesus along with his childhood miracles.

Ethiopian Liturgy. Liturgical rite similar to the rite of Alexandria. Ethiopian liturgy has evolved since the introduction of Coptic liturgy to Ethiopia, traditionally by St. Frumen-

tius in the fourth century. Significant Eastern and Jewish influences were added over time.

Eucherius of Lyons (fl. 420-449). Bishop of Lyons c. 435-449. Born into an aristocratic family, he, along with his wife and sons, joined the monastery at Lérins soon after its founding. He explained difficult Scripture passages by means of a threefold reading of the text: literal, moral and spiritual.

Eugippius (b. 460). Disciple of Severinus and third abbot of the monastic community at Castrum Lucullanum, which was made up of those fleeing from Noricum during the barbarian invasions.

Eunomius (d. 393). Bishop of Cyzicyus who was attacked by Basil and Gregory of Nyssa for maintaining that the Father and the Son were of different natures, one ingenerate, one generate.

Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260/263-340). Bishop of Caesarea, partisan of the Emperor Constantine and first historian of the Christian church. He argued that the truth of the gospel had been foreshadowed in pagan writings but had to defend his own doctrine against suspicion of Arian sympathies.

Eusebius of Emesa (c. 300-c. 359). Bishop of Emesa from c. 339. A biblical exegete and writer on doctrinal subjects, he displays some semi-Arian tendencies of his mentor Eusebius of Caesarea.

Eusebius of Gaul, or Eusebius Gallicanus (c. fifth century). A conventional name for a collection of seventy-six sermons produced in Gaul and revised in the seventh century. It contains material from different patristic authors and focuses on ethical teaching in the context of the liturgical cycle (days of saints and other feasts).

Eusebius of Vercelli (fl. c. 360). Bishop of Vercelli who supported the trinitarian teaching of Nicaea (325) when it was being undermined by compromise in the West.

Eustathius of Antioch (fl. 325). First bishop of Beroea, then of Antioch, one of the leaders of the anti-Arians at the council of Nicaea. Later, he was banished from his seat and exiled to Thrace for his support of Nicene theology.

Euthymius (377-473). A native of Melitene and influential monk. He was educated by Bishop Otreius of Melitene, who ordained him priest and placed him in charge of all the monasteries in his diocese. When the Council of Chalcedon (451) condemned the errors of Eutyches, it was greatly due to the authority of Euthymius that most of the Eastern recluses accepted its decrees. The empress Eudoxia returned to Chalcedonian orthodoxy through his efforts.

Evagrius of Pontus (c. 345-399). Disciple and teacher of ascetic life who astutely absorbed and creatively transmitted the spirituality of Egyptian and Palestinian monasticism of the late fourth century. Although Origenist elements of his writings were formally condemned by the Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II, A.D. 553), his literary corpus continued to influence the tradition of the church.

Eznik of Kolb (early fifth century). A disciple of Mesrob who translated Greek Scriptures into Armenian, so as to become the model of the classical Armenian language. As bishop, he participated in the synod of Astisat (449).

Facundus of Hermiane (fl. 546-568). African bishop who opposed Emperor Justinian's postmortem condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyr and Ibas of Ebessa at the fifth ecumenical council. His written defense, known as "To Justinian" or "In Defense of the Three Chapters," avers that ancient theologians should not be blamed for errors that became obvious only upon later theological reflection. He continued in the tradition of Chalcedon, although his Christology was supplemented, according to Justinian's decisions, by the theopaschite formula *Unus ex Trinitate passus est* ("Only one of the three suffered").

Fastidiosus (late fifth-early sixth century).

African Catholic priest who converted to Arianism. The text of one of his sermons survives in a refutation by Fulgentius.

Fastidius (c. fourth-fifth centuries). British author of *On the Christian Life*. He is believed to have written some works attributed to Pelagius.

Faustinus (fl. 380). A priest in Rome and supporter of Lucifer and author of a treatise on the Trinity.

Faustus of Riez (c. 400-490). A prestigious British monk at Lérins; abbot, then bishop of Riez from 457 to his death. His works include *On the Holy Spirit*, in which he argued against the Macedonians for the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and *On Grace*, in which he argued for a position on salvation that lay between more categorical views of free will and predestination. Various letters and (pseudonymous) sermons are extant.

The Festal Menaion. Orthodox liturgical text containing the variable parts of the service, including hymns, for fixed days of celebration of the life of Jesus and Mary.

Filastrius (fl. 380). Bishop of Brescia and author of a compilation against all heresies.

Firmicus Maternus (fourth century). An anti-Pagan apologist. Before his conversion to Christianity he wrote a work on astrology (334-337). After his conversion, however, he criticized paganism in *On the Errors of the Profane Religion*.

Firmilian of Caesarea (fl. c. 230-c. 268). Influential bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. He studied under Origen and became involved in the controversies over the return of the lapsed into the church and rebaptism, having written to Cyprian concerning the latter issue.

First Creed of the Council of Antioch (341). Eastern bishops' response to charges of Arianism from Western leaders. At a gathering that marked the dedication of the Golden Church at Antioch, the bishops put forth four creeds as alternatives to the Nicene formula.

Flavian of Chalon-sur-Saône (d. end of sixth century). Bishop of Chalon-sur-Saône in Burgundy, France. His hymn *Verses on the Mandate in the Lord's Supper* was recited in a number of the French monasteries after the washing of the feet on Maundy Thursday.

Fructuosus of Braga (d. c. 665). Son of a Gothic general and member of a noble military family. He became a monk at an early age, then abbot-bishop of Dumium before 650 and metropolitan of Braga in 656. He was influential in setting up monastic communities in Lusitania, Asturia, Galicia and the island of Gades.

Fulgentius of Ruspe (c. 467-532). Bishop of Ruspe and author of many orthodox sermons and tracts under the influence of Augustine.

Gaudentius of Brescia (fl. 395). Successor of Filastrius as bishop of Brescia and author of twenty-one Eucharistic sermons.

Gennadius of Constantinople (d. 471). Patriarch of Constantinople, author of numerous commentaries and an opponent of the Christology of Cyril of Alexandria.

Germanus of Constantinople (c. 640-c. 733). Patriarch of Constantinople (715-730). He wrote the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which served for centuries as the explanation of the divine liturgy of the Byzantine Church, written during the outbreak of the great iconoclastic controversies in Eastern Christianity. One of the leading theologians of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681), which condemned monothelitism.

Gerontius (c. 395-c. 480). Palestinian monk, later archimandrite of the cenobites of Palestine. He led the resistance to the council of Chalcedon.

Gildas (sixth century). British monk and historian. His major work is *De excidio Britanniae*, a history focused on the pagan invasion of Britain and the vices of contemporary Britons. Fragments of letters and a Penitential are also attributed to Gildas.

Gnostics. Name now given generally to followers of Basilides, Marcion, Valentinus, Mani and others. The characteristic belief is that

matter is a prison made for the spirit by an evil or ignorant creator, and that redemption depends on fate, not on free will.

Gospel of Peter (late second century). An early apocryphal writing with Docetic aspects that likely originated in Syria. It was referred to by Serapion (c. 190) and Origen, though only one section survives in an eighth-century manuscript.

Gospel of Philip (second or third century). A Gnostic collection of sayings, including several attributed to Jesus, on the process of salvation. This Coptic document, discovered at Nag Hammadi, is probably unconnected with the *Gospel of Philip* cited by Epiphanius.

Gospel of Truth (second century). One of the Coptic texts found at Nag Hammadi. This Gnostic treatise discusses the nature, ministry and death of Jesus, and includes several unique speculations. Some scholars have connected it with the second-century Gnostic Valentinus. Irenaeus referred to it disparagingly as the so-called *Gospel of Truth*, which he found to be in conflict with the four canonical Gospels.

Gregory of Elvira (fl. 359-385). Bishop of Elvira who wrote allegorical treatises in the style of Origen and defended the Nicene faith against the Arians.

Gregory of Narek (950-1003). Armenian monk, philosopher, mystic and poet who lived in the monasteries of Narek (greater Armenia, now Turkey). He wrote a mystical interpretation of the Song of Songs and the Armenian Prayer book and liturgy. The latter, which he authored in his mature years, he referred to as his "last testament."

Gregory of Nazianzus (b. 329/330; fl. 372-389). Cappadocian father, bishop of Constantinople, friend of Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, and author of theological orations, sermons and poetry.

Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-394). Bishop of Nyssa and brother of Basil the Great. A Cappadocian father and author of catechetical orations, he was a philosophical theologian of great originality.

Gregory of Tours (c. 538-594). Bishop of Tours elected in 573. Gregory produced hagiographical and historical works. His *Historia Francorum*, a fragmentary yet valuable source, begins with creation and highlights sixth-century Gaul.

Gregory Thaumaturgus (fl. c. 248-264). Bishop of Neocaesarea and a disciple of Origen. There are at least five legendary *Lives* that recount the events and miracles which led to his being called "the wonder worker." His most important work was the *Address of Thanks to Origen*, which is a rhetorically structured panegyric to Origen and an outline of his teaching.

Gregory the Great (c. 540-604). Pope from 590, the fourth and last of the Latin "Doctors of the Church." He was a prolific author and a powerful unifying force within the Latin Church, initiating the liturgical reform that brought about the Gregorian Sacramentary and Gregorian chant.

Hegemonius (fl. early fourth century). Author of *Acta disputationis*, traditionally believed to have been written in fourth-century Syria. This work is a fictitious debate between a Mesopotamian bishop and a Manichaean.

Hegesippus (second century). An author, possibly of Jewish descent, who served as a source for Eusebius and is best known for five books of anti-Gnostic polemic.

Heracleon (fl. c. 145-180). Gnostic teacher and disciple of Valentinus. His commentary on John, which was perhaps the first commentary to exist on this or any Gospel, was so popular that Ambrose commissioned Origen to write his own commentary in response, providing a more orthodox approach to the Fourth Gospel.

Hesychius of Jerusalem (fl. 412-450). Presbyter and exegete, thought to have commented on the whole of Scripture.

Hilary of Arles (c. 401-449). Archbishop of Arles and leader of the Semi-Pelagian party.

Hilary incurred the wrath of Pope Leo I when he removed a bishop from his see and appointed a new bishop. Leo demoted Arles from a metropolitan see to a bishopric to assert papal power over the church in Gaul.

Hilary of Poitiers (c. 315-367). Bishop of Poitiers and called the "Athanasius of the West" because of his defense (against the Arians) of the common nature of Father and Son.

Hippolytus (fl. 222-245). Recent scholarship places Hippolytus in a Palestinian context, personally familiar with Origen. Though he is known chiefly for *The Refutation of All Heresies*, he was primarily a commentator on Scripture (especially the Old Testament) employing typological exegesis.

Horsiesi (c. 305-c. 390). Pachomius's second successor, after Petronius, as a leader of cenobitic monasticism in Southern Egypt.

Hyperechius (c. fifth century). A monk known only from his *Exhortation to the Monks*, 160 statements in Greek on monastic virtues, and the collection *Sayings of the Fathers*, which quotes eight of these exhortations.

Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35-107/112). Bishop of Antioch who wrote several letters to local churches while being taken from Antioch to Rome to be martyred. In the letters, which warn against heresy, he stresses orthodox Christology, the centrality of the Eucharist and unique role of the bishop in preserving the unity of the church.

Ildefonsus of Toledo (mid seventh century). Archbishop of Toledo (657-667). Previously a monk, he served as abbot of Agalí, and later as archbishop. Only a portion of his works is extant, including some theological works and letters. He is best known for his *De viris illustribus* (Lives of Illustrious Men) continuing the catalog begun by Isidore of Seville. His extant writing reflects his Marian piety.

Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 135-c. 202). Bishop of Lyons who published the most famous and influential refutation of Gnostic thought.

Isaac of Nineveh (d. c. 700). Also known as Isaac the Syrian or Isaac Syrus, this monastic writer served for a short while as bishop of Nineveh before retiring to live a secluded monastic life. His writings on ascetic subjects survive in the form of numerous homilies.

Isaiah of Scete (late fourth century). Author of ascetical texts, collected after his death under the title of the *Ascetic Discourses*. This work was influential in the development of Eastern Christian asceticism and spirituality.

Isho'dad of Merv (fl. c. 850). Nestorian bishop of Hedatta. He wrote commentaries on parts of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament, frequently quoting Syriac fathers.

Isidore of Pelusium (d. c. 440). Egyptian ascetic. Born to a prominent Egyptian family in Alexandria, he left behind his wealth to live on a mountain near Pelusium, and was often consulted by church and civic leaders alike, such as Cyril of Alexandria and Theodosius II, for his wisdom and his counsel of moderation. Many of his letters also have come down to us, some of which provide keen insight into the interpretation of Scripture.

Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636). Youngest of a family of monks and clerics, including sister Florentina and brothers Leander and Fulgentius. He was an erudite author of comprehensive scale in matters both religious and sacred, including his encyclopedic *Etymologies*.

Jacob of Nisibis (d. 338). Bishop of Nisibis. He was present at the council of Nicaea in 325 and took an active part in the opposition to Arius.

Jacob of Sarug (c. 450-c. 520). Syriac ecclesiastical writer. Jacob received his education at Edessa. At the end of his life he was ordained bishop of Sarug. His principal writing was a long series of metrical homilies, earning him the title "The Flute of the Holy Spirit."

Jerome (c. 347-420). Gifted exegete and exponent of a classical Latin style, now best known as the translator of the Latin Vulgate. He defended the perpetual virginity of Mary, attacked Origen and Pelagius and supported

extreme ascetic practices.
John Chrysostom (344/354-407; fl. 386-407). Bishop of Constantinople who was noted for his orthodoxy, his eloquence and his attacks on Christian laxity in high places.
John of Antioch (d. 441/42). Bishop of Antioch, commencing in 428. He received his education together with Nestorius and Theodore of Mopsuestia in a monastery near Antioch. A supporter of Nestorius, he condemned Cyril of Alexandria, but later reached a compromise with him.
John of Apamea (fifth century). Syriac author of the early church who wrote on various aspects of the spiritual life, also known as John the Solitary. Some of his writings are in the form of dialogues. Other writings include letters, a treatise on baptism, and shorter works on prayer and silence.
John of Carpathus (c. seventh/eighth century). Perhaps John the bishop from the island of Carpathus, situated between Crete and Rhodes, who attended the Synod of 680/81. He wrote two "centuries" (a literary genre in Eastern spirituality consisting of 100 short sections, or chapters). These were entitled *Chapters of Encouragement to the Monks of India* and *Chapters on Theology and Knowledge* which are included in the *Philokalia*.
John of Damascus (c. 650-750). Arab monastic and theologian whose writings enjoyed great influence in both the Eastern and Western Churches. His most influential writing was the *Orthodox Faith*.
John of Jerusalem (John II of Jerusalem) (late fourth-early fifth century). Successor of Cyril as bishop of Jerusalem (386-417). Engaged with Epiphanius in the first Origenist controversy and became involved in the Pelagian controversy. He is probably the author of the five Mystagogical Lectures attributed to Cyril.
John the Elder (c. eighth century). A Syriac author also known as John of Dalyatha or John Saba ("the elder") who belonged to monastic circles of the Church of the East and lived in the region of Mount Qardu (northern Iraq). His most important writings are twenty-two homilies and a collection of fifty-one short letters in which he describes the mystical life as an anticipatory experience of the resurrection life, the fruit of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.
John the Monk. Traditional name found in *The Festal Menaion*, believed to refer to John of Damascus. *See* John of Damascus.
Joseph of Thebes (fourth century). One of the desert fathers of Scetis, also known as Abba Joseph, who taught the most important virtue of a monk was to remain in complete submission to a spiritual father in total renunciation of one's own will.
Joseph's Bible Notes (Hypomnestikon) (fourth or fifth century). A pastiche of biblical and historical questions drawn from various writers, including the Jewish historian, Josephus. It was believed to have been written by Josephus Christianus, derived from the brief poem appended at the end of the book, but the author ultimately is unknown. It evidences an Alexandrian Christology.
Josephus, Flavius (c. 37-c. 101). Jewish historian from a distinguished priestly family. Acquainted with the Essenes and Sadducees, he himself became a Pharisee. He joined the great Jewish revolt that broke out in 66 and was chosen by the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem to be commander-in-chief in Galilee. Showing great shrewdness to ingratiate himself with Vespasian by foretelling his elevation and that of his son Titus to the imperial dignity, Josephus was restored his liberty after 69 when Vespasian became emperor.
Julian of Eclanum (c. 385-450). Bishop of Eclanum in 416/417 who was removed from office and exiled in 419 for not officially opposing Pelagianism. In exile, he was accepted by Theodore of Mopsuestia, whose Antiochene exegetical style he followed. Although he was never able to regain his ecclesiastical position, Julian taught in Sicily until his death. His

works include commentaries on Job and parts of the Minor Prophets, a translation of Theodore of Mopsuestia's commentary on the Psalms, and various letters. Sympathetic to Pelagius, Julian applied his intellectual acumen and rhetorical training to argue against Augustine on matters such as free will, desire and the locus of evil.

Julian Pomerius (late fifth-early sixth century). Author of *On the Contemplative Life* and a teacher of Caesarius of Arles. Originally from Mauretania, Julian moved to southern Gaul where he was ordained as a priest. He eventually settled in Arles as a teacher of rhetoric.

Julian the Arian (c. fourth century). Antiochene, Arian author of *Commentary on Job*, and probably a follower of Aetius and Eunomius. The *85 Apostolic Canons*, once part of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, and the Pseudo-Ignatian writings are also attributed to him.

Julius Africanus (c. 160-c. 240). First Christian chronographer who influenced later historians such as Eusebius. Born in Jerusalem, he was charged with organizing a library in the Pantheon at Rome. He was acquainted with Origen during the time he studied in Alexandria and corresponded with him. He died in Palestine.

Justin Martyr (c. 100/110-165; fl. c. 148-161). Palestinian philosopher who was converted to Christianity, "the only sure and worthy philosophy." He traveled to Rome where he wrote several apologies against both pagans and Jews, combining Greek philosophy and Christian theology; he was eventually martyred.

Justinian the Emperor (482-565). Emperor of Byzantium, 527-565. As the second member of the Justinian Dynasty, he instituted an ambitious, though failed, restoration of the Byzantine Empire. He sought theological unity through a politicized Christianity that persecuted perceived heretics and apostates along with Jews and pagans. Many of his writings are extant, including twenty-one letters and four dogmatic works.

Lactantius (c. 260-c. 330). Christian apologist removed from his post as teacher of rhetoric at Nicomedia upon his conversion to Christianity. He was tutor to the son of Constantine and author of *The Divine Institutes*.

Leander (c. 545-c. 600). Latin ecclesiastical writer, of whose works only two survive. He was instrumental in spreading Christianity among the Visigoths, gaining significant historical influence in Spain in his time.

Leo the Great (regn. 440-461). Bishop of Rome whose *Tome to Flavian* helped to strike a balance between Nestorian and Cyrilline positions at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

Letter of Barnabas (c. 130). An allegorical and typological interpretation of the Old Testament with a decidedly anti-Jewish tone. It was included with other New Testament works as a "Catholic epistle" at least until Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260/263-340) questioned its authenticity.

Letter to Diognetus (c. third century). A refutation of paganism and an exposition of the Christian life and faith. The author of this letter is unknown, and the exact identity of its recipient, Diognetus, continues to elude patristic scholars.

Liturgy of St. Basil (fourth century and onward). The liturgical collections of the Byzantine liturgy containing an anaphora attributed to Basil the Great. The liturgy has evolved considerably over the centuries.

Liturgy of St. James. A liturgy adopted throughout the East, including by the Syrian Orthodox Church. Traditionally attributed to St. James the bishop of Jerusalem, it survives in both Greek and Syriac versions.

Liturgy of St. Mark (fourth century). Traditional Eucharistic liturgy of the Alexandrian Church. First adopted by the Egyptian Melchites, its extant manuscripts are based on an early Egyptian text, and forms of the rite are still used by the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches.

Liturgy of the Blessed Apostles (first or second

century). One of the earliest Christian liturgies. Attributed to Addai (Addaeus) and Mari (Maris), Christian missionaries to Edessa and surrounding areas of Syria, the liturgy was also celebrated in Mesopotamia and Persia. It was likely used in the Syrian church and was also taken up later by the Nestorians.

Liturgy of the Coptic Jacobites (sixth century). Liturgy of the West Syrian Church named after the monophysite Jacob Baradaeus (d. 578) who used this rite, in the Coptic language, to solidify the hierarchy of monophysitism. Many of the anaphorae can be traced back in their basic structure to the church of Jerusalem in apostolic times.

Liturgy of the Hours (third century). Early liturgy for prayers throughout the day. The church community, especially monastics, offered prayer at set times of the day: morning prayer, prayers of terce (third hour), sext (sixth hour) and none (ninth hour) that correspond to the hours of Christ's crucifixion and death. Evening prayer was associated with the nighttime rest of the world itself. More elaborate and extended divisions of the hours followed that included Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline, reflective of a theology of time that celebrates the rhythm of life as God's people communicate with him.

Lucifer (d. 370/371). Bishop of Cagliari and vigorous supporter of Athanasius and the Nicene Creed. In conflict with the emperor Constantius, he was banished to Palestine and later to Thebaid (Egypt).

Luculentius (fifth century). Unknown author of a group of short commentaries on the New Testament, especially Pauline passages. His exegesis is mainly literal and relies mostly on earlier authors such as Jerome and Augustine. The content of his writing may place it in the fifth century.

Macarius of Egypt (c. 300-c. 390). One of the Desert Fathers. Accused of supporting Athanasius, Macarius was exiled c. 374 to an island in the Nile by Lucius, the Arian successor of Athanasius. Macarius continued his teaching of monastic theology at Wadi Natrun.

Macrina the Younger (c. 327-379). The elder sister of Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, she is known as "the Younger" to distinguish her from her paternal grandmother. She had a powerful influence on her younger brothers, especially on Gregory, who called her his teacher and relates her teaching in *On the Soul and the Resurrection*.

Manichaeans. A religious movement that originated circa 241 in Persia under the leadership of Mani but was apparently of complex Christian origin. It is said to have denied free will and the universal sovereignty of God, teaching that kingdoms of light and darkness are coeternal and that the redeemed are particles of a spiritual man of light held captive in the darkness of matter (*see* Gnostics).

Marcellus of Ancyra (d. c. 375). Wrote a refutation of Arianism. Later, he was accused of Sabellianism, especially by Eusebius of Caesarea. While the Western church declared him orthodox, the Eastern church excommunicated him. Some scholars have attributed to him certain works of Athanasius.

Marcion (fl. 144). Heretic of the mid second century who rejected the Old Testament and much of the New Testament, claiming that the Father of Jesus Christ was other than the Old Testament God (*see* Gnostics).

Marius Victorinus (b. c. 280/285; fl. c. 355-363). Grammarian of African origin who taught rhetoric at Rome and translated works of Platonists. After his conversion (c. 355), he wrote works against the Arians and commentaries on Paul's letters.

Mark the Hermit (c. sixth century). Monk who lived near Tarsus and produced works on ascetic practices as well as christological issues.

Martin of Braga (fl. c. 568-579). Anti-Arian metropolitan of Braga on the Iberian peninsula. He was highly educated and presided over the provincial council of Braga in 572.

Martyrdom of Polycarp (c. 160). A letter

written shortly after the death of the eighty-six-year-old bishop of Smyrna which provides, in sometimes gruesome detail, the earliest account of Christian martyrdom outside of the New Testament.

Martyrius. *See* Sahdona.

Maximinus (the Arian) (b. c. 360-65). Bishop of an Arian community, perhaps in Illyricum. Of Roman descent, he debated publicly with Augustine at Hippo (427 or 428), ardently defending Arian doctrine. Besides the polemical works he wrote against the orthodox, such as his *Against the Heretics, Jews and Pagans*, he also wrote fifteen sermons that are considered much less polemical, having been previously attributed to Maximus of Turin. He is also known for his twenty-four *Explanations of Chapters of the Gospels*.

Maximus of Turin (d. 408/423). Bishop of Turin. Over one hundred of his sermons survive on Christian festivals, saints and martyrs.

Maximus the Confessor (c. 580-662). Palestinian-born theologian and ascetic writer. Fleeing the Arab invasion of Jerusalem in 614, he took refuge in Constantinople and later Africa. He died near the Black Sea after imprisonment and severe suffering, having his tongue cut off and his right hand mutilated. He taught total preference for God and detachment from all things.

Melito of Sardis (d. c. 190). Bishop of Sardis. According to Polycrates, he may have been Jewish by birth. Among his numerous works is a liturgical document known as *On Pascha* (ca. 160-177). As a Quartodeciman, and one intimately involved in that controversy, Melito celebrated Pascha on the fourteenth of Nisan in line with the custom handed down from Judaism.

Methodius of Olympus (d. 311). Bishop of Olympus who celebrated virginity in a Symposium partly modeled on Plato's dialogue of that name.

Minucius Felix (second or third century). Christian apologist who was an advocate in Rome. His *Octavius* agrees at numerous points with the *Apologeticum of Tertullian*. His birthplace is believed to be in Africa.

Montanist Oracles. Montanism was an apocalyptic and strictly ascetic movement begun in the latter half of the second century by a certain Montanus in Phrygia, who, along with certain of his followers, uttered oracles they claimed were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Little of the authentic oracles remains and most of what is known of Montanism comes from the authors who wrote against the movement. Montanism was formally condemned as a heresy before by Asiatic synods.

Muratorian Fragment (second century). Earliest known list of New Testament books, preserved in an eighth-century manuscript. The document is missing its first lines yet includes all but five books of the final canon. It also discusses various contested writings, several of which are clearly rejected.

Nemesius of Emesa (fl. late fourth century). Bishop of Emesa in Syria whose most important work, *Of the Nature of Man*, draws on several theological and philosophical sources and is the first exposition of a Christian anthropology.

Nestorius (c. 381-c. 451). Patriarch of Constantinople (428-431) who founded the heresy which says that there are two persons, divine and human, rather than one person truly united in the incarnate Christ. He resisted the teaching of theotokos, causing Nestorian churches to separate from Constantinople.

Nicetas of Remesiana (fl. second half of fourth century). Bishop of Remesiana in Serbia, whose works affirm the consubstantiality of the Son and the deity of the Holy Spirit.

Nilus of Ancyra (d. c. 430). Prolific ascetic writer and disciple of John Chrysostom. Sometimes erroneously known as Nilus of Sinai, he was a native of Ancyra and studied at Constantinople.

Novatian of Rome (fl. 235-258). Roman theologian, otherwise orthodox, who formed a schismatic church after failing to become pope.

His treatise on the Trinity states the classic Western doctrine.

Odes of Solomon (early second century). A collection of forty-two pseudo-Solomonic poems containing commentary on the liturgy of a Judeo-Christian community in Syria. The poems are permeated with soteriological concerns, though they never mention the name Jesus.

Oecumenius (sixth century). Called the Rhetor or the Philosopher, Oecumenius wrote the earliest extant Greek commentary on Revelation. Scholia by Oecumenius on some of John Chrysostom's commentaries on the Pauline Epistles are still extant.

Olympiodorus (early sixth century). Exegete and deacon of Alexandria, known for his commentaries that come to us mostly in catenae.

Optatus (fourth century). Bishop of Milevis in North Africa. He wrote a treatise against Donatism. These six books emphasize the uniqueness of the Catholic Church and include a list of documents on the Donatist controversy.

Origen of Alexandria (b. 185; fl. c. 200-254). Influential exegete and systematic theologian. He was condemned (perhaps unfairly) for maintaining the preexistence of souls while purportedly denying the resurrection of the body. His extensive works of exegesis focus on the spiritual meaning of the text.

Pachomius (c. 292-347). Founder of cenobitic monasticism. A gifted group leader and author of a set of rules, he was defended after his death by Athanasius of Alexandria.

Pacian of Barcelona (c. fourth century). Bishop of Barcelona whose writings polemicize against popular pagan festivals as well as Novatian schismatics.

Palladius of Helenopolis (c. 363/364-c. 431). Bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia (400-417) and then Aspuna in Galatia. A disciple of Evagrius of Pontus and admirer of Origen, Palladius became a zealous adherent of John Chrysostom and shared his troubles in 403. His *Lausaic History* is the leading source for the history of early monasticism, stressing the spiritual value of the life of the desert.

Papias of Hierapolis (c. early second century). Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia who may have known the apostle John. Through his writings, which are extant only in fragments preserved in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, Papias influenced later theologians including Irenaeus, Hippolytus and Victorinus, and provided an important witness to traditions about the origins of the Gospels.

Paschasius of Dumium (c. 515-c. 580). Translator of sentences of the Desert Fathers from Greek into Latin while a monk in Dumium.

Paterius (c. sixth-seventh century). Disciple of Gregory the Great who is primarily responsible for the transmission of Gregory's works to many later medieval authors.

Patrick (d. c. 492). Saint known as the apostle to Ireland. Born in Britain and later kidnapped at the age of sixteen by pirates, Patrick was taken to Ireland where he worked as a shepherd. He later returned to Britain and undertook training in Gaul and possibly also Lerins for the apostolate. According to tradition, he was consecrated a bishop and returned to northern Ireland in 432 where he preached the gospel and established his see at Armagh, which was extended to the continent via Irish missionaries. His two works that survive are *Epistle to the Soldier Coroticus* and *Confession*, written toward the end of his life. His feast day is March 17.

Paulinus of Milan (late 4th-early 5th century). Personal secretary and biographer of Ambrose of Milan. He took part in the Pelagian controversy.

Paulinus of Nola (355-431). Roman senator and distinguished Latin poet whose frequent encounters with Ambrose of Milan (c. 333-397) led to his eventual conversion and baptism in 389. He eventually renounced his wealth and influential position and took up his pen to write poetry in service of Christ. He also wrote many letters to, among others,

Augustine, Jerome and Rufinus.

Paulus Orosius (b. c. 380). An outspoken critic of Pelagius, mentored by Augustine. His *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* was perhaps the first history of Christianity.

Pelagius (c. 354-c. 420). Contemporary of Augustine whose followers were condemned in 418 and 431 for maintaining that even before Christ there were people who lived wholly without sin and that salvation depended on free will.

Peter Chrysologus (c. 380-450). Latin archbishop of Ravenna whose teachings included arguments for adherence in matters of faith to the Roman see, and the relationship between grace and Christian living.

Peter of Alexandria (d. c. 311). Bishop of Alexandria. He marked (and very probably initiated) the reaction at Alexandria against extreme doctrines of Origen. During the persecution of Christians in Alexandria, Peter was arrested and beheaded by Roman officials. Eusebius of Caesarea described him as "a model bishop, remarkable for his virtuous life and his ardent study of the Scriptures."

Philip the Priest (d. 455/56) Acknowledged by Gennadius as a disciple of Jerome. In his *Commentary on the Book of Job*, Philip utilizes Jerome's Vulgate, providing an important witness to the transmission of that translation. A few of his letters are extant.

Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.-c. A.D. 50). Jewish-born exegete who greatly influenced Christian patristic interpretation of the Old Testament. Born to a rich family in Alexandria, Philo was a contemporary of Jesus and lived an ascetic and contemplative life that makes some believe he was a rabbi. His interpretation of Scripture based the spiritual sense on the literal. Although influenced by Hellenism, Philo's theology remains thoroughly Jewish.

Philoxenus of Mabbug (c. 440-523). Bishop of Mabbug (Hierapolis) and a leading thinker in the early Syrian Orthodox Church. His extensive writings in Syriac include a set of thirteen *Discourses on the Christian Life*, several works on the incarnation and a number of exegetical works.

Phoebadius of Agen (d. c. 395). Bishop of Agen whose *Contra arianos* attacked the 357 pro-Arian formula of Sirmium. Phoebadius was the last leader induced to sign the formula of Ariminum in 359, a compromise widely viewed as an Arian triumph.

Photius (c. 820-891). An important Byzantine churchman and university professor of philosophy, mathematics and theology. He was twice the patriarch of Constantinople. First he succeeded Ignatius in 858, but was deposed in 863 when Ignatius was reinstated. Again he followed Ignatius in 878 and remained the patriarch until 886, at which time he was removed by Leo VI. His most important theological work is *Address on the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, in which he articulates his opposition to the Western filioque, i.e., the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. He is also known for his Amphilochia and Library (Bibliotheca).

Poemen (c. fifth century). One-seventh of the sayings in the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* are attributed to Poemen, which is Greek for shepherd. Poemen was a common title among early Egyptian desert ascetics, and it is unknown whether all of the sayings come from one person.

Polycarp of Smyrna (c. 69-155). Bishop of Smyrna who vigorously fought heretics such as the Marcionites and Valentinians. He was the leading Christian figure in Roman Asia in the middle of the second century.

Possidius (late fourth-fifth century). A member of Augustine's monastic community at Hippo from 391, then bishop of Calama in Numidia sometime soon after 397. He fled back to Hippo when Vandals invaded Calama in 428 and cared for Augustine during his final illness. Returning to Calama after the death of Augustine (430), he was expelled by

Genseric, Arian king of the Vandals, in 437. Nothing more is known of him after this date. Sometime between 432 and 437 he wrote *Vita Augustini*, to which he added *Indiculus*, a list of Augustine's books, sermons and letters.

Potamius of Lisbon (fl. c. 350-360). Bishop of Lisbon who joined the Arian party in 357, but later returned to the Catholic faith (c. 359?). His works from both periods are concerned with the larger Trinitarian debates of his time.

Primasius (fl. 550-560). Bishop of Hadrumetum in North Africa (modern Tunisia) and one of the few Africans to support the condemnation of the Three Chapters. Drawing on Augustine and Tyconius, he wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse, which in allegorizing fashion views the work as referring to the history of the church.

Proclus of Constantinople (c. 390-446). Patriarch of Constantinople (434-446). His patriarchate dealt with the Nestorian controversy, rebutting, in his *Tome to the Armenian Bishops*, Theodore of Mopsuestia's Christology where Theodore was thought to have overly separated the two natures of Christ. Proclus stressed the unity of Christ in his formula "One of the Trinity suffered," which was later taken up and spread by the Scythian monks of the sixth century, resulting in the theopaschite controversy. Proclus was known as a gifted preacher and church politician, extending and expanding Constantinople's influence while avoiding conflict with Antioch, Rome and Alexandria.

Procopius of Gaza (c. 465-c. 530). A Christian exegete educated in Alexandria. He wrote numerous theological works and commentaries on Scripture (particularly the Hebrew Bible), the latter marked by the allegorical exegesis for which the Alexandrian school was known.

Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390-c. 463). Probably a lay monk and supporter of the theology of Augustine on grace and predestination. He collaborated closely with Pope Leo I in his doctrinal statements.

Prudentius (c. 348-c. 410). Latin poet and hymn writer who devoted his later life to Christian writing. He wrote didactic poems on the theology of the incarnation, against the heretic Marcion and against the resurgence of paganism.

Pseudo-Clementines (third-fourth century). A series of apocryphal writings pertaining to a conjured life of Clement of Rome. Written in a form of popular legend, the stories from Clement's life, including his opposition to Simon Magus, illustrate and promote articles of Christian teaching. It is likely that the corpus is a derivative of a number of Gnostic and Judeo-Christian writings. Dating the corpus is a complicated issue.

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (fl. c. 500). Author who assumed the name of Dionysius the Areopagite mentioned in Acts 17:34, and who composed the works known as the *Corpus Areopagiticum* (or *Dionysiacum*). These writings were the foundation of the apophatic school of mysticism in their denial that anything can be truly predicated of God.

Pseudo-Macarius (fl. c. 390). An anonymous writer and ascetic (from Mesopotamia?) active in Antioch whose badly edited works were attributed to Macarius of Egypt. He had keen insight into human nature, prayer and the inner life. His work includes some one hundred discourses and homilies.

Quodvultdeus (fl. 430). Carthaginian bishop and friend of Augustine who endeavored to show at length how the New Testament fulfilled the Old Testament.

Rabanus (Hrabanus) Maurus (c. 780-856). Frankish monk, theologian and teacher, student of Alcuin of York, then Abbot of Fulda from 822 to 842 and Archbishop of Mainz from 848 until his death in 856. The author of poetry, homilies, treatises on education, grammar, and doctrine, and an encyclopedia titled *On the Nature of Things*, he also wrote commentaries on Scripture, including the books of Kings and Esther. Though he is technically an early medieval writer, his works are included as

they reflect earlier thought.

Riddles in the Apocalypse (eighth century). Commentary on Revelation of unknown authorship. *De Enigmatibus ex Apocalypsi* in Latin, the commentary explores the enigmatic symbolism of the book. It is contained in the one volume commentary known as the *Irish Reference Bible*, or *Das Bibelwerk* which dates from the late eighth century (see also CCL 7:231-95).

Romanus Melodus (fl. c. 536-556). Born as a Jew in Emesa not far from Beirut where after his baptism he later became deacon of the Church of the Resurrection. He later moved to Constantinople and may have seen the destruction of the Hagia Sophia and its rebuilding during the time he flourished there. As many as eighty metrical sermons (*kontakia*, sg. *kontakion*) that utilize dialogical poetry have come down to us under his name. These sermons were sung rather than preached during the liturgy, and frequently provide theological insights and Scriptural connections often unique to Romanus. His Christology, closely associated with Justinian, reflects the struggles against the Monophysites of his day.

Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 345-411). Orthodox Christian thinker and historian who nonetheless translated and preserved the works of Origen, and defended him against the strictures of Jerome and Epiphanius. He lived the ascetic life in Rome, Egypt and Jerusalem (the Mount of Olives).

Sabellius (fl. 200). Allegedly the author of the heresy which maintains that the Father and Son are a single person. The patripassian variant of this heresy states that the Father suffered on the cross.

Sahdona (fl. 635-640). Known in Greek as Martyrius, this Syriac author was bishop of Beth Garmai. He studied in Nisibis and was exiled for his christological ideas. His most important work is the deeply scriptural *Book of Perfection* which ranks as one of the masterpieces of Syriac monastic literature.

Salvian the Presbyter of Marseilles (c. 400-c. 480). An important author for the history of his own time. He saw the fall of Roman civilization to the barbarians as a consequence of the reprehensible conduct of Roman Christians. In *The Governance of God* he developed the theme of divine providence.

Second Letter of Clement (c. 150). The so called *Second Letter of Clement* is an early Christian sermon probably written by a Corinthian author, though some scholars have assigned it to a Roman or Alexandrian author.

Sedulius, Coelius (fl. 425-450). Author of the *Paschale carmen*, a poem in five books, which focuses on the miraculous character of Christ's suffering. Sedulius learned philosophy in Italy and was later converted to Christianity by the presbyter Macedonius. He has at times been confused with the poet Sedulius Scotus (ninth century). He is also known for the similarly themed *Paschale opus*, among other works.

Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian (256). One of many Carthaginian councils convened in response to the controversy surrounding rebaptisms. All bishops present, including Cyprian, deemed that baptism administered by heretics was invalid and necessitated rebaptism, a position later revised by Augustine.

Severian of Gabala (fl. c. 400). A contemporary of John Chrysostom, he was a highly regarded preacher in Constantinople, particularly at the imperial court, and ultimately sided with Chrysostom's accusers. He wrote homilies on Genesis.

Severus of Antioch (fl. 488-538). A monophysite theologian, consecrated bishop of Antioch in 522. Born in Pisidia, he studied in Alexandria and Beirut, taught in Constantinople and was exiled to Egypt.

Shenoute (c. 350-466). Abbot of Athribis in Egypt. His large monastic community was known for very strict rules. He accompanied Cyril of Alexandria to the Council of Ephesus in 431, where he played an important

role in deposing Nestorius. He knew Greek but wrote in Coptic, and his literary activity includes homilies, catecheses on monastic subjects, letters, and a couple of theological treatises.

***Shepherd* of Hermas** (second century). Divided into five *Visions*, twelve *Mandates* and ten *Similitudes*, this Christian apocalypse was written by a former slave and named for the form of the second angel said to have granted him his visions. This work was highly esteemed for its moral value and was used as a textbook for catechumens in the early church.

Sibylline Oracles (second century B.C.-second century A.D.) An apocryphal collection of Greek prophecies. Spanning the second century B.C. to the second century A.D., the collection is the product of Christian redaction of Jewish adaptations and expansions of pagan Greek oracles.

Socrates (Scholasticus) (c. 380-450). Greek historian and lawyer from Constantinople. His *Ecclesiastical History*, meant to continue the work of Eusebius, comprises seven books, each covering the reign of one emperor between 306 and 439.

Sophronius of Jerusalem (Sophronius Sophistes) (c. 550-638). Patriarch of Jerusalem (634-638) and opponent of monothelitism. Born in Damascus of Arabic descent, Sophronius became a monk and friend to John Moschus at a monastery near Jerusalem, though he also ministered in Sinai, Egypt and Italy.

Stephen of Hnes (Stephen of Heracleopolis Magna) (seventh century?). Bishop of Hnes who built two small chapels, or monasteries, in the district of Cusae in upper Egypt. He wrote a panegyric to Apollo the archimandrite of the monastery of Isaac. Apollo, who had met the Patriarch Severus of Antioch just before his death in 538, was Stephen's spiritual father. He wrote another encomium to St. Helias who was later venerated by her followers in the cult of St. Helias.

Sulpicius Severus (c. 360-c. 420). An ecclesiastical writer from Bordeaux born of noble parents. Devoting himself to monastic retirement, he became a personal friend and enthusiastic disciple of St. Martin of Tours.

Symeon the New Theologian (c. 949-1022). Compassionate spiritual leader known for his strict rule. He believed that the divine light could be perceived and received through the practice of mental prayer.

Syncletica (fifth century). Egyptian nun known from collected sayings and a fifth-century *Life*. Syncletica began ascetic practices in her parents' Alexandria home and after their death retired to desert life. Until succumbing to illness in her eighties, she was a spiritual leader to women who gathered to learn from her piety.

Synesios of Cyrene (c. 370-c. 413). Bishop of Ptolemais elected in 410. Born of a noble pagan family, Synesios studied in Alexandria under the neoplatonist philosopher Hypatia. His work includes nine hymns that present a complex Trinitarian theology with neoplatonic influences.

Synod of Alexandria (362). A gathering of Egyptian bishops and Nicene delegates, called by Athanasius after the death of Constantius. The synod published a letter that expressed anti-Arian agreement on Trinitarian language.

Tarasius of Constantinople (d. 806). Patriarch of Constantinople from 784. Tarasius promoted reconciliation between Eastern and Western churches. At his urging Empress Irene II called the Second Council of Nicaea (787) to address debates over iconoclasm.

Tatian (second century). Christian apologist from the East who studied under Justin in Rome, returning to his old country after his mentor's martyrdom. Famous for his Gospel harmony, the *Diatessaron*, Tatian also wrote *Address to the Greeks*, which was a defense of Christianity addressed to the pagan world.

Tertullian of Carthage (c. 155/160-225/250; fl. c. 197-222). Brilliant Carthaginian apologist and polemicist who laid the foundations

of Christology and trinitarian orthodoxy in the West, though he himself was later estranged from the catholic tradition due to its laxity.

Theodore bar Koni (d. 845). Important Nestorian author and apologist who taught at the school of Kashkar [Iraq] in Beth Aramaye and later became metropolitan of Beth Garmai. Numerous works are attributed to him, though only a collection of scholia on the Old and New Testaments which offers a defense of East Syrian Christianity and refutations of Islam and various heresies is extant. He also wrote an ecclesiastical history that provided a glimpse into the lives of Nestorian patriarchs, a book on logic, and treatises against monophysitism and Arianism.

Theodore of Heraclea (d. c. 355). An anti-Nicene bishop of Thrace. He was part of a team seeking reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christianity. In 343 he was excommunicated at the council of Sardica. His writings focus on a literal interpretation of Scripture.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428). Bishop of Mopsuestia, founder of the Antiochene, or literalistic, school of exegesis. A great man in his day, he was later condemned as a precursor of Nestorius.

Theodore of Tabennesi (d. 368) Vice general of the Pachomian monasteries (c. 350-368) under Horsiesi. Several of his letters are known.

Theodoret of Cyr (c. 393-466). Bishop of Cyr (Cyrrhus), he was an opponent of Cyril who commented extensively on Old Testament texts as a lucid exponent of Antiochene exegesis.

Theodotus of Ancyra (d. before 446). Bishop of Ancyra in Galatia and friend-turned-enemy of Nestorius. He fought against John of Antioch who consequently excommunicated him. Several of his works are extant.

Theodotus the Valentinian (second century). Likely a Montanist who may have been related to the Alexandrian school. Extracts of his work are known through writings of Clement of Alexandria.

Theophanes (775-845). Hymnographer and bishop of Nicaea (842-845). He was persecuted during the second iconoclastic period for his support of the Seventh Council (Second Council of Nicaea, 787). He wrote many hymns in the tradition of the monastery of Mar Sabbas that were used in the *Paraklitiki*.

Theophilus of Alexandria (d. 412). Patriarch of Alexandria (385-412) and the uncle of his successor, Cyril. His patriarchate was known for his opposition to paganism, having destroyed the Serapeion and its library in 391, but he also built many churches. He also was known for his political machinations against his theological enemies, especially John Chrysostom, whom he himself had previously consecrated as patriarch, ultimately getting John removed from his see and earning the intense dislike of Antioch Christians. He is, however, venerated among the Copts and Syrians, among whom many of his sermons have survived, although only a few are deemed authentically his. His *Homily on the Mystical Supper*, commenting on the Last Supper, is perhaps one of his most well known.

Theophilus of Antioch (late second century). Bishop of Antioch. His only surviving work is *Ad Autholycum*, where we find the first Christian commentary on Genesis and the first use of the term Trinity. Theophilus's apologetic literary heritage had influence on Irenaeus and possibly Tertullian.

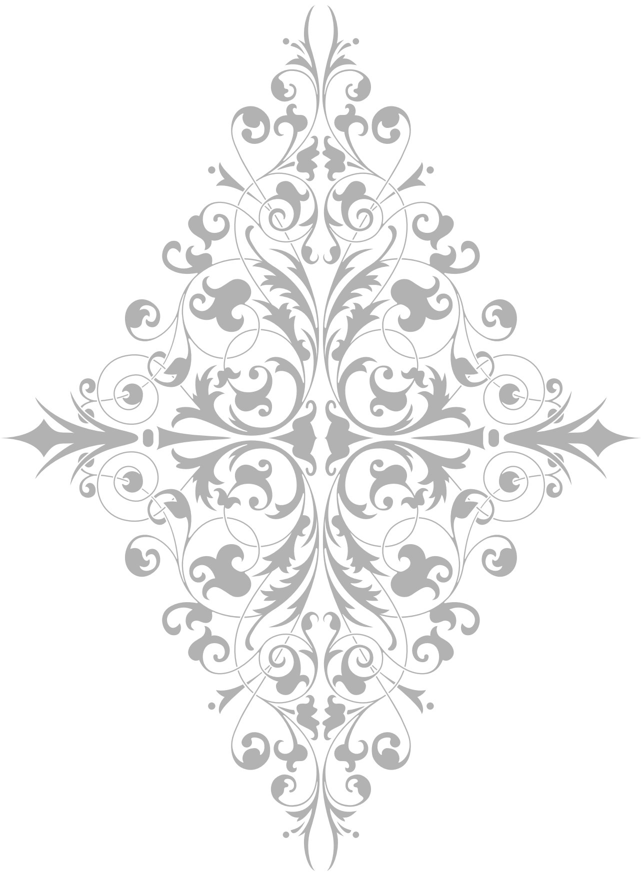
Theophylact of Ohrid (c. 1050-c. 1108). Byzantine archbishop of Ohrid (or Achrida) in what is now Bulgaria. Drawing on earlier works, he wrote commentaries on several Old Testament books and all of the New Testament except for Revelation.

Third Council of Constantinople (681). The Sixth Ecumenical Council, convoked by Constantine IV to resolve the Monothelite controversy. The council's decree affirmed the doctrine that Christ's two natures correspond

to two distinct wills and two energies.
Treatise on Rebaptism (third century). An anonymous treatise arguing, possibly against Cyprian, that those receiving baptism by heretics in the name of Jesus ought not be rebaptized.
Tyconius (c. 330-390). A lay theologian and exegete of the Donatist church in North Africa who influenced Augustine. His *Book of Rules* is the first manual of scriptural interpretation in the Latin West. In 380 he was excommunicated by the Donatist council at Carthage.
Valentinian Exposition (second century). A type of secret catechism for those who were to be initiated into the Valentinian version of gnosis. It provided an exposition of the origin of creation and was also concerned with the process of how our salvation is achieved in light of the myth of Sophia. There are references to the sacramental rituals of baptism and the Eucharist and also early evidences of the disagreements and theological controversies that existed among Valentinian theologians.
Valentinus (fl. c. 140). Alexandrian heretic of the mid second century who taught that the material world was created by the transgression of God's Wisdom, or Sophia (*see* Gnostics).
Valerian of Cimiez (fl. c. 422-439). Bishop of Cimiez. He participated in the councils of Riez (439) and Vaison (422) with a view to strengthening church discipline. He supported Hilary of Arles in quarrels with Pope Leo I.
Venantius Fortunatus (c. 530-c. 610). Latin poet. In 597 Venantius was appointed bishop of Poitiers, where he had served the community of former queen Radegunde since 567. His works include lives of saints and two hymns that were soon incorporated into Western liturgy.
Verecundus (d. 552). An African Christian writer, who took an active part in the christological controversies of the sixth century, especially in the debate on Three Chapters. He also wrote allegorical commentaries on the nine liturgical church canticles.
Victor of Cartenna (fifth century). Bishop of Cartenna in Mauretania Caesariensis to whom Gennadius attributed *Adversus Arianos*. Other works have been attributed to him, including select works associated with Pseudo-Ambrose and Pseudo-Basil.
Victor of Vita (fl. 480/481-484). Bishop of Vita in the Byzacena province and author of a history of the Vandal persecution in Africa. There is disagreement over the details of his life.
Victorinus of Petovium (d. c. 304). Latin biblical exegete. With multiple works attributed to him, his sole surviving work is the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* and perhaps some fragments from *Commentary on Matthew*. Victorinus expressed strong millenarianism in his writing, though his was less materialistic than the millenarianism of Papias or Irenaeus. In his allegorical approach he could be called a spiritual disciple of Origen. Victorinus died during the first year of Diocletian's persecution, probably in 304.
Vigilius of Thapsus (fl. c. 484). Bishop of Thapsus, who took part in talks between Catholics and Arians at Carthage in 484. Vigilius was the author of *Contra Eutychetem* and the *Dialogus contra arianos, sabellianos et photinianos*, and probably *Contra Felicianum*.
Vincent of Lérins (d. before 450). Monk who has exerted considerable influence through his writings on orthodox dogmatic theological method, as contrasted with the theological methodologies of the heresies.
Walafridius (Walahfrid) Strabo (808-849). Frankish monk, writer and student of Rabanus Maurus. Walafridius was made abbot of the monastery of Reichenau in 838 but was exiled in 840, when one of the sons of Emperor Louis the Pious—to whom Walafridius was loyal—invaded Reichenau. He was restored in 842 and died in 849. His writings include poetry, commentaries on scripture, lives of saints and

a historical explanation of the liturgy. Though he is technically an early medieval writer, his works are included

Zephyrinus (d. 217). Bishop of Rome from 199 to 217. Renewed his predecessor Victor's condemnation of the adoptionism being taught in Rome by Theodotus of Byzantium and readmitted the excommunicated modalist bishop Natalius upon the latter's repentance, but as a layperson. Much of what we know about him is from the work of Hippolytus, whose negative opinion of Zephyrinus may have been colored by his antagonism toward Zephyrinus's successor, Callistus. The epistles attributed to Zephyrinus are now considered spurious (part of the so-called False Decretals of the ninth century) but are included as possibly reflecting earlier thought.



Timeline of Writers of the Patristic Period

The following chronology will assist readers in locating patristic writers, writings and recipients of letters referred to in this patristic commentary. Persons are arranged chronologically according to the terminal date of the years during which they flourished (fl.) or, where that cannot be determined, the date of death or approximate date of writing or influence. Writings are arranged according to the approximate date of composition. This list is cumulative with respect to all volumes of the ACCS.

Timeline of Writers of the Patristic Period

Location / Period	British Isles	Gaul	Spain, Portugal	Rome* and Italy	Carthage and Northern Africa
2nd century				Clement of Rome, fl. c. 92-101 (Greek)	
				Shepherd of Hermas, c. 140 (Greek)	
				Justin Martyr (Ephesus, Rome), c. 100/110-165 (Greek)	
				Tatian (Rome/Syria), 2nd cent. (Greek)	
				Muratorian Fragment, 2nd cent. (Latin [orig. Greek])	
				Valentinus the Gnostic (Rome), fl. c. 140 (Greek)	
				Hegesippus, 2nd cent. (Greek)	
		Irenaeus of Lyons, c. 135-c. 202 (Greek)			
				Marcion (Rome), fl. 144 (Greek)	
				Heracleon, 145-180 (Greek)	
3rd century				Zephyrinus (Rome), regn. 199-217	Tertullian of Carthage, c. 155/160-c. 225 (Latin)
				Callistus of Rome, regn. 217-222 (Latin)	
				Minucius Felix of Rome, fl. 218-235 (Latin)	
				Hippolytus (Rome, Palestine?), fl. 222-235/245 (Greek)	
				Novatian of Rome, fl. 235-258 (Latin)	Cyprian of Carthage, fl. 248-258 (Latin)
					Seventh Council of Carthage Under Cyprian, 256 (Latin)
					Treatise on Rebaptism, 3rd cent. (Latin)
				Victorinus of Petovium, 230-304 (Latin)	

*One of the five ancient patriarchates

Alexandria* and Egypt	**Constantinople* and Asia Minor, Greece**	**Antioch* and Syria**	**Mesopotamia, Persia**	**Jerusalem* and Palestine**	**Location Unknown**
Philo of Alexandria, c. 20 B.C. - c. A.D. 50 (Greek)				Flavius Josephus (Rome), c. 37-c. 101 (Greek)	
Basilides (Alexandria), 2nd cent. (Greek)	Polycarp of Smyrna, c. 69-155 (Greek)	Ignatius of Antioch, c. 35-107/112 (Greek)			
	Martyrdom of Polycarp, c. 160 (Greek)	*Didache* (Egypt?), c. 100 (Greek)			
Letter of Barnabas (Syria?), c. 130 (Greek)	Aristides, 2nd cent. (Greek)	*Odes of Solomon* (perhaps also Palestine or Egypt), early 2nd cent. (Syriac/Aramaic)			
Gospel of Truth (Egypt?), 2nd cent. (Coptic/Greek)	Papias of Hierapolis, c. early 2nd cent. (Greek)				
Valentinian Exposition, 2nd cent. (Greek)					*Second Letter of Clement* (spurious; Corinth, Rome, Alexandria?) c. 150, (Greek)
Theodotus the Valentinian, 2nd cent. (Greek)	Athenagoras (Greece), fl. 176-180 (Greek)				
Epistula Apostolorum, mid 2nd cent. (Greek [Coptic/Ethiopic])					
	Melito of Sardis, d. c. 190 (Greek)			Julius Africanus, c. 160-c. 240 (Greek)	
	Acts of Paul and Thecla, 2nd cent. (Greek)	*Gospel of Peter*, late 2nd cent. (Greek)			
Clement of Alexandria, c. 150-215 (Greek)	*Acts of Peter*, c. 190 (Greek)	Theophilus of Antioch, c. late 2nd cent. (Greek)			
	Montanist Oracles, late 2nd cent. (Greek)				
Sabellius (Egypt), 2nd-3rd cent. (Greek)		*Gospel of Philip* (Syria, Egypt?) 2nd or 3rd cent. (Coptic/Greek)			
Letter to Diognetus, 3rd cent. (Greek)		Bardesanes, 154-222 (Syriac)			
		Acts of Thomas, c. 225 (Syriac)	Mani (Manichaeans), c. 216-276 (Persian/Syriac)		Pseudo-Clementines 3rd cent. (Greek)
Origen (Alexandria, Caesarea of Palestine), 185-254 (Greek)	Firmilian of Caesarea, fl. c. 230-c. 268 (Greek)	*Didascalia Apostolorum*, early 3rd cent. (Syriac)			
Dionysius of Alexandria, d. 264/5 (Greek)	Gregory Thaumaturgus (Neocaesarea), fl. c. 248-264 (Greek)				
	Methodius of Olympus (Lycia), d. c. 311 (Greek)				

Timeline of Writers of the Patristic Period

Location / Period	British Isles	Gaul	Spain, Portugal	Rome* and Italy	Carthage and Northern Africa
4th century		Lactantius, c. 260- 330 (Latin)			
				Firmicus Maternus (Sicily), fl. c. 335 (Latin)	Arnobius of Sicca, d. c. 327 (Latin)
			Hosius of Cordova, d. 357 (Latin)	Marius Victorinus (Rome), fl. 355-363 (Latin)	
			Potamius of Lisbon, fl. c. 350-360 (Latin)	Eusebius of Vercelli, fl. c. 360 (Latin)	
		Hilary of Poitiers, c. 315-367 (Latin)	Gregory of Elvira, fl. 359-385 (Latin)	Lucifer of Cagliari (Sardinia), d. 370/371 (Latin)	
				Damasus of Rome, c. 304-384 (Latin)	Optatus of Milevis, 4th cent. (Latin)
				Ambrosiaster (Italy?), fl. c. 366-384 (Latin)	
				Filastrius of Brescia, fl. 380 (Latin)	
			Pacian of Barcelona, 4th cent. (Latin)	Faustinus (Rome), fl. 380 (Latin)	
			Prudentius, c. 348-c. 410 (Latin)	Faustus of Riez, fl. c. 380 (Latin)	Isaiah of Scete, late 4th cent. (Greek)
		Egeria, 4th cent. (Latin)		Gaudentius of Brescia, fl. 395 (Latin)	Paulus Orosius, b. c. 380 (Latin)
		Phoebadius of Agen, d. c. 395 (Latin)			
		Athanasian Creed, c. 4th or 5th cent. (Latin)		Ambrose of Milan, c. 333-397; fl. 374-397 (Latin)	Augustine of Hippo, 354-430 (Latin)
					Synesios of Cyrene (Alexandria, Cyrene), c. 370-c. 413 (Greek)
5th century	Fastidius (Britain), c. 4th-5th cent. (Latin)	*Joseph's Bible Notes,* 4th or 5th cent. (Latin)		Paulinus of Milan, late 4th-early 5th cent. (Latin)	Possidius, late 4th-5th cent. (Latin)
		Sulpicius Severus (Bordeaux), c. 360-c. 420/425 (Latin)		Rufinus (Aquileia, Rome), c. 345-411 (Latin)	
		John Cassian (Palestine, Egypt, Constantinople, Rome, Marseilles), 360-432 (Latin)		Chromatius (Aquileia), fl. 400 (Latin)	
				Aponius, fl. 405-415 (Latin)	Luculentius, 5th cent. (Latin)
	Sedulius, Coelius, fl. 425-450 (Latin)	Vincent of Lérins, d. 435 (Latin)		Pelagius (Britain, Rome), c. 354-c. 420 (Greek)	
		Valerian of Cimiez, fl. c. 422-449 (Latin)		Maximus of Turin, d. 408/423 (Latin)	Quodvultdeus (Carthage), fl. 430 (Latin)
		Eucherius of Lyons, fl. 420-449 (Latin)		Paulinus of Nola, 355-431 (Latin)	
		Hilary of Arles, c. 401-449 (Latin)		Peter Chrysologus (Ravenna), c. 380-450 (Latin)	Dracontius, 5th cent. (Latin)
				Julian of Eclanum, 386-454 (Latin)	

*One of the five ancient patriarchates

Alexandria* and Egypt	Constantinople* and Asia Minor, Greece	Antioch* and Syria	Mesopotamia, Persia	Jerusalem* and Palestine	Location Unknown
	Constantine, d. 337 (Greek)		Hegemonius, fl. early 4th cent. (Greek)		
Antony, c. 251-355 (Coptic /Greek)	Theodore of Heraclea (Thrace), fl. c. 330-355 (Greek)	Eustathius of Antioch, fl. 325 (Greek)	Aphrahat (Persia) c. 270-350; fl. 337-345 (Syriac)	Eusebius of Caesarea (Palestine), c. 260/263-340 (Greek)	Commodian, c. 3rd or 5th cent. (Latin)
Peter of Alexandria, d. c. 311 (Greek)	Marcellus of Ancyra, d. c. 375 (Greek)	Eusebius of Emesa, c. 300-c. 359 (Greek)			
Arius (Alexandria), fl. c. 320 (Greek)	Epiphanius of Salamis (Cyprus), c. 315-403 (Greek)	Ephrem the Syrian, c. 306-373 (Syriac)	Jacob of Nisibis, fl. 308-325 (Syriac)		
Alexander of Alexandria, fl. 312-328 (Greek)	Basil (the Great) of Caesarea, b. c. 330; fl. 357-379 (Greek)	Julian the Arian, c. 4th cent. (Greek)			
Pachomius, c. 292-347 (Coptic/Greek?)	Macrina the Younger, c. 327-379 (Greek)	First Creed of the Council of Antioch, 341 (Greek)			
Theodore of Tabennesi, d. 368 (Coptic/Greek)	Apollinaris of Laodicea, 310-c. 392 (Greek)				
Athanasius of Alexandria, c. 295-373; fl. 325-373 (Greek)	Gregory of Nazianzus, b. 329/330; fl. 372-389 (Greek)	Nemesius of Emesa (Syria), fl. late 4th cent. (Greek)			Maximinus, b. c. 360-365 (Latin)
Abba Pior, d. 373 (Coptic/Greek)	Gregory of Nyssa, c. 335-394 (Greek)	Diodore of Tarsus, d. c. 394 (Greek)		Acacius of Caesarea (Palestine), d. c. 365 (Greek)	
Horsiesi, c. 305-390 (Coptic/Greek)	Amphilochius of Iconium, c. 340/345- c. 398/404 (Greek)	John Chrysostom (Constantinople), 344/354-407 (Greek)		Cyril of Jerusalem, c. 315-386 (Greek)	
Macarius of Egypt, c. 300-c. 390 (Greek)	Evagrius of Pontus, 345-399 (Greek)	*Apostolic Constitutions*, c. 375-400 (Greek)		John (II) of Jerusalem, late 4th-early 5th cent. (Greek)	
Abba John, date unknown (Coptic/Greek)		*Didascalia*, 4th cent. (Syriac)			
Didymus (the Blind) of Alexandria, 313-398 (Greek)	Eunomius of Cyzicus, fl. 360-394 (Greek)	Theodore of Mopsuestia, c. 350-428 (Greek)			
Tyconius, c. 330-390 (Latin)	Pseudo-Macarius (Mesopotamia?), late 4th cent. (Greek)	Acacius of Beroea, c. 340-c. 436 (Greek)		Diodore of Tarsus, d. c. 394 (Greek)	
Joseph of Thebes, 4th cent. (Coptic/Greek)	Nicetas of Remesiana, d. c. 414 (Latin)	Asterius the Homilist (Antioch), late 4th- early 5th (Greek)		Jerome (Rome, Antioch, Bethlehem), c. 347-420 (Latin)	
Ammonas, 4th cent. (Syriac)		*Book of Steps*, c. 400 (Syriac)			
Abba Moses, c. 332-407 (Coptic/Greek)	Socrates (Scholasticus), c. 380-450 (Greek)	Severian of Gabala, fl. c. 400 (Greek)			
Theophilus of Alexandria, d. 412 (Greek)	Theodotus of Ancyra, d. before 446 (Greek)				
Palladius of Helenopolis (Egypt), c. 365-425 (Greek)	Proclus of Constantinople, c. 390-446 (Greek)		Eznik of Kolb, fl. 430-450 (Armenian)	Philip the Priest (d. 455/56)	
Cyril of Alexandria, 375-444 (Greek)	Nestorius (Constantinople), c. 381-c. 451 (Greek)			Hesychius of Jerusalem, fl. 412-450 (Greek)	
Isidore of Pelusium, d. c. 440 (Greek)	Basil of Seleucia, fl. 440-468 (Greek)	Nilus of Ancyra, d. c. 430 (Greek)		Euthymius (Palestine), 377-473 (Greek)	
Hyperichius, c. 5th cent. (Coptic/Greek)	Diadochus of Photice (Macedonia), 400-474 (Greek)	John of Antioch, d. 441/2 (Greek)			

Timeline of Writers of the Patristic Period

Location / Period	British Isles	Gaul	Spain, Portugal	Rome* and Italy	Carthage and Northern Africa
5th century (cont.)		Eusebius of Gaul, 5th cent. (Latin) Prosper of Aquitaine, c. 390-c. 463 (Latin) Salvian the Presbyter of Marseilles, c. 400-c. 480 (Latin) Gennadius of Marseilles, d. after 496 (Latin) Julian Pomerius, late 5th-early 6th cent. (Latin)		Leo the Great (Rome), regn. 440-461 (Latin) Arnobius the Younger (Rome), fl. c. 450 (Latin) Ennodius (Arles, Milan, Pavia) c. 473-521 (Latin) Epiphanius the Latin, late 5th-early 6th cent. (Latin)	Victor of Cartenna, 5th cent. (Latin) Victor of Vita, fl. 480/481-484 (Latin) Vigilius of Thapsus, fl. c. 484 (Latin)
6th century	Gildas, 6th cent. (Latin)	Caesarius of Arles, c. 470-543 (Latin) Gregory of Tours, c. 538-594 (Latin) Flavian of Chalon-sur-Saône, fl. 580-600 (Latin)	Paschasius of Dumium (Portugal), c. 515-c. 580 (Latin) Apringius of Beja, mid-6th cent. (Latin) Leander of Seville, c. 545-c. 600 (Latin) Martin of Braga, fl. 568-579 (Latin)	Eugippius, c. 460- c. 533 (Latin) Benedict of Nursia, c. 480-547 (Latin) Cassiodorus (Calabria), c. 485-c. 540 (Latin) Arator, c. 490-550 (Latin) Gregory of Agrigentium, d. 592 (Greek)	Fulgentius of Ruspe, c. 467-532 (Latin) Fastidiosus, late 5th-early 6th cent. (Latin) Verecundus, d. 552 (Latin) Primasius, fl. 550-560 (Latin) Facundus of Hermiane, fl. 546-568 (Latin)
7th century		Venantius Fortunatus (Gaul, Italy), c. 530-c. 610 (Latin)	Isidore of Seville, c. 560-636 (Latin) Braulio of Saragossa, c. 585-651 (Latin) Ildefonsus of Toledo, mid 7th cent. (Latin) Fructuosus of Braga, d. c. 665 (Latin)	Gregory the Great (Rome), c. 540-604 (Latin) Paterius, 6th/7th cent. (Latin)	
8th-12th century	Adamnan, c. 624-704 (Latin) Bede the Venerable, c. 672/673-735 (Latin) *Riddles in the Apocalypse,* 8th cent. (Latin)	Rabanus Maurus (Frankish), c. 780-856 (Latin) Walafridius Strabo (Frankish), 808-849 (Latin) Dhuoda, 9th cent. (Latin)			

*One of the five ancient patriarchates

Alexandria* and Egypt	Constantinople* and Asia Minor, Greece	Antioch* and Syria	Mesopotamia, Persia	Jerusalem* and Palestine	Location Unknown
Syncletica, 5th cent. (Coptic/Greek)	Callinicus, mid 5th cent. (Greek)				
Poemen, 5th cent. (Greek)	Gennadius of Constantinople, d. 471 (Greek)	Theodoret of Cyr, c. 393-466 (Greek)		Gerontius of Petra c. 395-c. 480 (Syriac)	
Besa the Copt, 5th cent. (Sahidic)		Pseudo-Victor of Antioch, 5th cent. (Greek)			
Shenoute, c. 350-466 (Coptic)		John of Apamea, 5th cent. (Syriac)			
Ammonius of Alexandria, late 5th-early 6th cent. (Greek)				Barsanuphius and John, 5th/6th cent. (Greek)	
Olympiodorus, early 6th cent. (Greek)	Andrew of Caesarea (Cappadocia), early 6th cent. (Greek)	Philoxenus of Mabbug (Syria), c. 440-523 (Syriac)	Jacob of Sarug, c. 450-520 (Syriac)	Procopius of Gaza (Palestine), c. 465-530 (Greek)	Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, fl. c. 500 (Greek)
	Oecumenius (Isauria), 6th cent. (Greek)	Severus of Antioch, c. 465-538 (Greek)	Babai, early 6th cent. (Syriac)	Dorotheus of Gaza, fl. 525-540 (Greek)	
	Romanus Melodus, fl. c. 536-556 (Greek)	Mark the Hermit (Tarsus), c. 6th cent. (4th cent.?) (Greek)		Cyril of Scythopolis, b. c. 525; d. after 557 (Greek)	
	Justinian the Emperor, 482-565 (Greek)	Anastasius I of Antioch, d. 598/599 (Latin)	Abraham of Nathpar, fl. 6th-7th cent. (Syriac)		(Pseudo-) Constantius, before 7th cent.? (Greek)
	Maximus the Confessor (Constantinople), c. 580-662 (Greek)		Babai the Great, c. 550-628 (Syriac)		
Anastasius of Sinai (Egypt, Syria), d. c. 700 (Greek)					
	Germanus of Constantinople, c. 640-c. 733 (Greek)			Sophronius of Jerusalem, c. 550-638 (Greek)	Andreas, c. 7th cent. (Greek)
		Sahdona/Martyrius, fl. 635-640 (Syriac)	Isaac of Nineveh, d. c. 700 (Syriac)		
	Andrew of Crete, c. 660-740 (Greek)				
Stephen of Hnes, 7th cent. (Coptic)	John of Carpathus, 7th-8th cent. (Greek)	John of Damascus (John the Monk), c. 650-750 (Greek)		Cosmas Melodus, c. 675-751 (Greek)	
	Tarasius of Constantinople, d. 806 (Greek)		John the Elder of Qardu (north Iraq), 8th cent. (Syriac)		
	Theophanes (Nicaea), 775-845 (Greek)	Theodore bar Koni, d. 845 (Syriac)			
	Cassia (Constantinople), c. 805-c. 848/867 (Greek)		Isho'dad of Merv, d. after 852 (Syriac)		
	Photius (Constantinople), c. 820-891 (Greek)				
	Arethas of Caesarea (Constantinople/Caesarea), c. 860-940 (Greek)				
	Gregory of Narek, 950-1003 (Armenian)				
	Symeon the New Theologian (Constantinople), 949-1022 (Greek)				
	Theophylact of Ohrid (Bulgaria), 1050-1126 (Greek)				

Bibliography of Works in Original Languages

This bibliography refers readers to original language sources and supplies Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (=TLG) or Cetedoc Clavis (=Cl.) numbers where available. The edition listed in this bibliography may in some cases differ from the edition found in TLG or Cetedoc databases.

Abraham of Nathpar. "On Prayer and Silence." British Library, Or. 6714, fol. 81b-83a.

Ambrose. "De fide libri v." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Otto Faller. CSEL 78. Vienna, Austria: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1962. Cl. 0150.

———. "De fuga saeculi." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Karl Schenkl. CSEL 32, pt. 2, pp. 163-207. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1897. Cl. 0133.

———. "De incarnationis dominicae sacramento." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Otto Faller. CSEL 79, pp. 225-281. Vienna, Austria: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1964. Cl. 0152.

———. "De interpellatione Job et David." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Karl Schenkl. CSEL 32, pt. 2, pp. 209-96. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1897. Cl. 0134.

———. "De Isaac vel anima." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Karl Schenkl. CSEL 32, pt. 1, pp. 639-700. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1897. Cl. 0128.

———. "De Jacob et vita beata." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Karl Schenkl. CSEL 32, pt. 2, pp. 1-70. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1897. Cl. 0130.

———. "De Joseph." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Karl Schenkl. CSEL 32, pt. 2, pp. 71-122. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1897. Cl. 0131.

———. "De mysteriis." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Otto Faller. CSEL 73, pp. 87-116. Vienna, Austria: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1955. Cl. 0155.

———. *De paenitentia*. Edited by Roger Gryson. SC 179. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1971. Cl. 0156.

———. "De paradiso." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Karl Schenkl. CSEL 32, pt. 1, pp. 263-336. Vienne, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1897. Cl. 0124.

———. "De patriarchis." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Karl Schenkl. CSEL 32, pt. 2, pp. 123-60. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1897. Cl. 0132.

———. "De spiritu sancto." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Otto Faller. CSEL 79, pp. 5-222. Vienna, Austria: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1964. Cl. 0151.

———. *De virginibus*. Italian and Latin. Translated with introduction, notes and appendixes by Franco Gori. Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana; Rome: Città nuova, 1989. Cl. 0145.

———. "Epistulae; Epistulae extra collectionem traditae." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Otto Faller and M. Zelzer. CSEL 82. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1968-1990. Cl. 0160.

———. "Exameron." In *Sancti Ambrosii opera*. Edited by Karl Schenkl. CSEL 32, pt. 1, pp. 1-261. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1897. Cl. 0123.

Ammonius. "Fragmenta in Joannem (in catenis)." In *JKGK*, pp. 196-358. Texte und Untersuchungen 89. Edited by Joseph Reuss. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966. TLG 2724.003.

Amphilochius of Iconium. "In illud: Non potest filius a se facere (orat. 9)." In *Amphilochii Iconiensis opera pub*, pp. 175-179. Edited by C. Datema. Turnhout: Brepols, 1978. TLG 2112.010.

Andrew of Crete. "In exaltationem venerandae cruces". In *Opera omnia*, PG 97, cols. 1018-46. Edited by J.-P. Migne Paris: Migne, 1860.

Apollinaris of Laodicea. "Fragmenta in Joannem (in catenis)." In *JKGK*, pp. 3-64. Edited by Joseph Reuss. Texte und Untersuchungen 89. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966. TLG 2074.038.

Athanasius. "De incarnatione verbi." In *Sur l'incarnation du verbe*. Edited by C. Kannengiesser. SC 199, pp. 258-468. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1973. TLG 2035.002.

———. "Epistulae festalis." In *Sancti Athanasii: Syriace et Latine*. Edited by Leonis Allatii. NPB 6. Rome: Typis Sacri Consilii Propagando Christiano Nomini, 1853.

———. "Historia Arianum." In *Athanasius Werke*. Vol. 2.1, pp. 183-230. Edited by H. G. Opitz. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1940. TLG 2035.009.

———. "Oratio quarta contra Arianos [Sp.]." In *Die pseudoathanasianische "IVte Rede gegen die Arianer" als "*κατὰ Ἀρειανῶν λόγος*" ein Apollinarisgut*, pp. 43-87. Edited by A. Stegmann. Rottenburg: Bader, 1917. TLG 2035.117.

———. "Orationes tres contra Arianos." In *Opera omnia*. PG 26, cols. 813-920. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1887. TLG 2035.042.

Augustine. *Confessionum libri tredecim*. Edited by L. Verheijen. CCL 27. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1981. Cl. 0251.

———. "De adulterinis coniugiis." In *Sancti Aureli Augustini opera*. Edited by J. Zycha. CSEL 41, pp. 347-410. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky, 1900. Cl. 0302.

———. "De agone christiano." In *Sancti Aureli Augustini opera*. Edited by Joseph Zycha. CSEL 41, pp. 101-38. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky, 1900. Cl. 0296.

———. *De civitate Dei*. In *Aurelii Augustini opera*. Edited by Bernhard Dombart and Alphons Kalb. CCL 47, 48. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1955. Cl. 0313.

———. *De consensu evangelistarum libri iv*. In *Sancti Aurelii Augustini*. Edited by Francis Weihrich. CSEL 43. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1904. Cl. 0273.

———. "De corruptione et gratia." In *Opera omnia*. PL 44, cols. 915-46. Edited by J.-P. Migne Paris: Migne, 1845. Cl. 0353.

———. "De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus." In *Aurelii Augustini opera*. Edited by Almut Mutzenbecher. CCL 44A, pp. 11-249. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1975. Cl. 0289.

———. "De doctrina christiana." In *Aurelii Augustini opera*. Edited by Joseph Martin. CCL 32, pp. 1-167. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1962. Cl. 0263.

———. "De fide et symbolo." In *Sancti Aureli Augustini opera*. Edited by Joseph Zycha. CSEL 41, pp. 3-32. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky, 1900. Cl. 0293.

———. *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim*. Edited by Joseph Zycha. CSEL 28, pt. 1, pp. 3-435. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsk, 1894. Cl. 0266.

———. "De libero arbitrio." In *Opera*. Edited by W.M. Green. CCL 29, pp. 211-321. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1970. Cl. 0260.

———. "De natura et gratia." In *Sancti Aurelii Augustini De peccatorum meritis et emissione et de baptismo parvulorum ad Marcellinum libri tres, De spiritu et littera liber unus, De natura et gratia liber unus, De natura et origine animae libri quattuor*. Edited by Karl Franz Urba and Joseph Zycha. CSEL 60, pp. 233-99. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1913. Cl. 0344.

———. "De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum." In *Sancti Aureli Augustini opera*. Edited by Karl Franz Urba and Joseph Zycha. CSEL 60, pp. 3-151. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky, 1913. Cl. 0342.

———. "De praedestinatione sanctorum." In *Opera omnia*. PL 44, cols. 959-92. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1861. Cl. 0354.

———. "De Trinitate." In *Aurelii Augustini opera*. Edited by William John Mountain. CCL 50-50A. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1968. Cl. 0329.

———. "Enarrationes in Psalmos." In *Aurelii Augustini opera*. Edited by Eligius Dekkers and John Fraipont. CCL 38, 39, 40. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1956. Cl. 0283.

———. "Enchiridion de fide, spe et caritate." In *Aurelii Augustini opera*. Edited by E. Evans. CCL 46, pp. 49-114. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1969. Cl. 0295.

———. *Epistulae 185-270*. Edited by A. Goldbacher. CSEL 57. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1911. Cl. 0262.

———. "In Johannis evangelium tractatus." In *Aurelii Augustini opera*. Edited by R. Willems. CCL 36. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0278.

———. "Sermones." In *Augustini opera omnia*. PL 38 and 39. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1844-1865. Cl. 0284.

Basil of Seleucia. "Orationes." In *Opera omnia*. PG 85, cols. 28-474. Edited by J.-P. Migne Paris: Migne, 1860. TLG 2800.002.

Basil the Great. "De baptismo libri duo." In *Opera omnia*. PG 31, cols. 1513-1628. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1885. TLG 2040.052.

———. *De spiritu sancto*. In *Basile de Césarée: Sur le Saint-Esprit*. Edited by Benoit Pruche. SC 17. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2002. TLG 2040.003.

———. "Epistulae." In *Saint Basil: Lettres*. Edited by Yves Courtonne. Vol. 2, pp. 101-218; vol. 3, pp. 1-229. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1961-1966. TLG 2040.004.

———. [Homily 16:] "In illud: In principio erat verbum." In *Opera omnia*. PG 31, cols. 472-481. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1885. TLG 2040.032.

———. "In sanctam Christi generationem." In *Opera omnia*. PG 31, cols. 1457-76. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1885. TLG 2040.059.

Bede. "Homiliarum evangelii." In *Bedae opera*. Edited by David Hurst. CCL 122, pp. 1-378. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1956. Cl. 1367.

———. *In epistulam septem catholicas*. In *Bedae opera*. Edited by David Hurst. CCL 121, pp.181-342. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1983. Cl. 1362.

———. "In Marci evangelium expositio." In *Opera*. Edited by David Hurst. CCL 120, pp. 431-648. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1960. Cl. 1355.

———. "In Matthaei evangelium exposition." In *Opera omnia*. PL 92, cols. 9-132. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1862.

———. "In S. Joannis evangelium exposition." In *Opera omnia*. PL 92, cols. 633-938. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1862.

Caesarius of Arles. *Sermones Caesarii Arelatensis*. Edited by Germain Morin. CCL 103, 104. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1953. Cl. 1008.

Chromatius of Aquileia. "Sermones." In *Opera*. Edited by J. Lemarié. CCL 9A, pp. 3-182. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1974. Cl. 0217.

Clement of Alexandria. "Paedagogus." In *Le pédagogue [par] Clement d'Alexandrie*. Translated by Mauguerite Harl, Chantel Matray and Claude Mondésert. Introduction and notes by Henri-Irénée Marrou. SC 70, 108, 158. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1960-1970. TLG 0555.002.

———. "Protrepticus." In Clément d'Alexandrie. Le protreptique. 2nd ed. Edited by C. Mondésert. SC 2, pp. 52-193. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1949. TLG 0555.001.

———. "Stromata." In *Clemens Alexandrinus*. Vol. 2, 3rd ed., and vol. 3, 2nd ed. Edited by Otto Stählin,

Ludwig Früchtel and Ursula Treu. GCS 15, pp. 3-518 and GCS 17, pp. 1-102. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960-1970. TLG 0555.004.

Constitutiones apostolorum. In *Les constitutions apostoliques*, 3 vols. Edited by Marcel Metzger. SC 320, 329, 336. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985-1987. TLG 2894.001.

Cosmas of Maiuma. "Hymni." In *S.P.N. Germani Opera omnia*. PG 98, cols. 475-83. Edited by J.-P. Migne Paris: Migne, 1860.

Cyprian. "De bono patientiae." In *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Epistularum*. Edited by C. Moreschini. CCL 3A, pp. 118-33. Turnhout, Belgium: Typographi Brepolis Editores Pontificii, 1976. Cl. 0048.

———. "De ecclesiae catholicae unitate." In *Sancti Cypriani episcopi opera*. Edited by Maurice Bévenot. CCL 3, pp. 249-68. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1972. Cl. 0041.

———. *Epistulae*. Edited by G. F. Diercks. CCL 3B, 3C. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1994-1996. Cl. 0050.

Cyril of Alexandria. "Commentarii in Joannem." *In Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in D. Joannis evangelium*. Edited by P. E. Pusey. Culture et Civilisation. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1872; repr. Brussels, 1965. TLG 4090.002.

———. "Letter 4, to Nestorius" In *Concilium universale Ephesenum anno 431*. Edited by E. Schwartz. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927. TLG 5000.001.

———. "In mysticam coenam [et pedum lavationem in sancta Quinta]." In *S.P.N. Cyrilli Opera omnia*. PG 77, cols. 1016-29. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1864. TLG 4090.032.

Cyril of Jeruslaem. "Catecheses ad illuminandos 1-18." In *Cyrilli Hierosolymorum archiepiscopi opera quae supersunt omnia*, 1:28-320; 2:2-342. 2 vols. Edited by W. C. Reischl and J. Rupp. Munich: Lentner, 1860 (repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967). TLG 2110.003.

———. "Mystagogiae 1-5 (Sp.)." In *Cyrille de Jérusalem: Catéchèses, mystagogigues*. 2nd ed. SC 126, pp. 82-174. Edited by Auguste Piédagnel. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1988. TLG 2110.002.

Didache xii apostolorum. In *Instructions des Apôtres*, pp. 226-42. Edited by J. P. Audet. Paris: Lecoffre, 1958. TLG 1311.001.

Didascalia Apostolorum. English and Syriac. 2 vols. Edited by Arthur Vööbus. CSCO 401-2, 407-8; Scriptores Syri 175-76, 179-80. Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus, 1979.

Didymus the Blind. "Commentarii in Ecclesiasten (11-12)." In *Didymos der Blinde. Kommentar zum Ecclesiastes*, pt. 6. Edited by G. Binder and L. Liesenborghs. PTA 9, pp. 2-244. Bonn: Habelt, 1969. TLG 2102.025.

———. "Fragmenta in Joannem (in catenis)." In *JKGK*, pp. 177-186 Edited by Joseph Reuss. Texte und Untersuchungen 89. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966. TLG 2102.025.

Dionysius of Alexandria. "Fragmenta." See *The Letters and Other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria*. Edited by Charles Lett Feltoe. Cambridge Patristic Texts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904.

Ephrem the Syrian. *In Tatiani Diatessaron*. In *Saint Éphrem: Commentaire de l'Évangile Concordant—Text Syriaque* (Ms Chester-Beatty 709), vol. 2. Edited by Louis Leloir. Leuven and Paris: Peeters Press, 1990.

———. *Hymni de nativitate*. Edited by Edmund Beck, 2 vols. CSCO 186, 187 (Scriptores Syri 82, 83). Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus, 1959.

———. *Hymni de virginitate*. Edited by Edmund Beck. 2 vols. CSCO 223, 224 (Scriptores Syri 94-95). Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus, 1962.

———. *Sermones in Hebdomadam Sanctam*. Edited by Edmund Beck. CSC0 412 (Scriptores Syri 181). Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus, 1979.

Eusebius of Caesarea. "Demonstratio evangelica." In *Eusebius Werke, Band 6: Die Demonstratio evangelica*. Edited by Ivar A. Heikel. GCS 23. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913. TLG 2018.005.

———. "Historia ecclesiastica." In *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique*, 3 vols. Edited by G. Bardy. SC

31, 41, 55, pp. (1:)3-215, (2:)4-231, (3:)3-120. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1952, 1955, 1958. TLG 2018.002.

Evagrius of Pontus. "De oratione" (under the name of Nilus of Ancyra). In *Opera omnia*. PG 79, cols. 1165-2000. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1865. TLG 4110.024.

Gregory of Nazianzus. "Apologetica (orat. 2)." In *Opera omnia*. PG 35, cols. 408-513. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1857. TLG 2022.016.

———. "Carmina dogmatica." In *Opera omnia*. PG 37, cols. 397-522. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1862. TLG 2022.059.

———. "Contra Arianos et de seipso [orat. 33]." In *Opera omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. PG 36, cols. 213-37. Paris: Migne, 1886. TLG 2022.041.

———. "In dictum evangelii: Cum consummasset Jesus hos sermones (orat. 37)." In *Opera omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. PG 36, cols. 281-308. Paris: Migne, 1886. TLG 2022.045.

———. "In patrem tacentem [orat. 16]." In *Opera omnia*. PG 35, cols. 933-64. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1857. TLG 2022.029.

———. "In sanctum baptisma (orat. 40)." In *Opera omnia*. PG 36, cols. 360-425. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1858. TLG 2022.048.

———. "In sancta lumina [orat. 39]." In *Opera omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. PG 36, cols. 336-60. Paris: Migne, 1886. TLG 2022.047.

———. "In sanctum pascha [orat. 45]." In *Opera omnia*. PG 36, cols. 624-64. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1886. TLG 2022.052.

———. "In sanctum pascha et in tarditatem (orat. 1)." In *Opera omnia*. PG 35, cols. 396-401. Edited by J.-P. Migne. Paris: Migne, 1857. TLG 2022.015.

———. "Orationes 29-31." In *Discours 27-31*. Translated by Paul Gallay. SC 250 pp. 176-343. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978. TLG 2022.008-011.

Gregory of Nyssa. "Contra Eunomium." In *Gregorii Nysseni opera*. 2 vols. Edited by W. Jaeger. Vol. 1.1, pp. 3-409; vol. 2.2, pp. 3-311. Leiden: Brill, 1960. TLG 2017.030.

———. "De virginitate." In *Grégoire de Nysse. Traité de la virginité*. Edited by M. Aubineau. SC 119, pp. 246-560. Paris: Cerf, 1966. TLG 2017.043.

———. "In Canticum canticorum (homiliae 15)." In *Gregorii Nysseni opera*. Vol. 6, pp. 3-469. Edited by H. Langerbeck. Leiden: Brill, 1960. TLG 2017.032.

———. "Refutatio confessionis Eunomii." In *Gregorii Nysseni opera*, vol. 2.2, pp. 312-410. Edited by W. Jaeger. Leiden: Brill, 1960. TLG 2017.031.

Gregory the Great. "Homiliae in Hiezechihelem prophetam." In *Opera*. Edited by Mark Adriaen. CCL 142, 3-398. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1971. Cl. 1710.

———. "Homiliarum xl in evangelica." In *Opera omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. PL 76, cols 1075-1312. Paris: Migne, 1857. Cl. 1711.

———. *Moralia in Job*. Edited by Mark Adriaen. CCL 143, 143A, 143B. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1979-1985. Cetedoc 1708.

———. *Registrum epistularum*. 2 vols. Edited by Dag Norberg. CCL 140, 140A. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1982. Cl. 0714.

Heracleon (via Origen). See "The Extant Fragments of Heracleon." In *The Fragments of Heracleon*. Edited A. E. Brooke. TS 1 4, pp. 50-103. Piscataway, N. J.: Gorgias Press, 2004.

Hilary of Poitiers. *De trinitate*. Edited by P. Smulders. CCL 62 and 62A. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1979-1980. Cl. 0433.

———. "In evangelium Matthaei commentarius." In *Opera omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. PL 9, cols. 917-1078. Paris: Migne, 1844.

———. "Liber de synodis, seu de fide orientalium." In *Opera omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. PL 10, cols. 471-546. Paris: Migne, 1845.

———. *Tractatus super psalmos I-XCI*. Edited by Jean Doignon. CCL 61. Turnhout: Brepols, 1997. Cl. 0428.

Hippolytus. "Contra haeresin Noeti." In *Hippolytus of Rome. Contra Noetum*, pp. 43-93. Edited by R. Butterworth. London: Heythrop College (University of London), 1977. TLG 2115.002.

Ignatius of Antioch. "Epistulae vii genuinae." In *Ignace d'Antioche: Polycarpe de Smyrne: Lettres: Martyre de Polycarpe*. 4th ed. Edited by P. T. Camelot. SC 10, pp. 56-154. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969. TLG 1443.001.

Irenaeus. "Adversus haereses, livre 3, 5." In *Contre les hérésies*. Edited by A. Rousseau and L. Doutreleau (Book 3, 5) and C. Mercier (Book 3). SC 100, 152-53, 210-11, 263-64, 293-94. Paris: du Cerf, 1965-82. Cl. 1154 f.

Isaac of Nineveh. "De perfectione religiosa." In *Mar Isaacus Ninivita. De perfectione Religiosa*, pp. 1-99. Edited by Paul Bedjan. Paris, 1966.

Isaiah of Scete. "Orationes." In *S.S. Patrum aegyptiorum opera omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. PG 40, cols.1105-206. Paris: Migne, 1863.

Jerome. "Contra Johannem Hierosolymitanum." Edited by J.-P. Migne. PL 23, cols. 371-412. Paris: Migne, 1845. Cl. 0612.

———. *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos*. Edited by Claudio Moreschini. CCL 80. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1990. Cl. 0615.

———. *Epistulae*. Edited by I. Hilberg. CSEL 54, 55, 56. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. F. Freytag, 1910-1918. Cl. 0620.

———. "Homilia in Johannem evangelistam (1:1-14)." In *Opera, Part 2*. Edited by G. Morin. CCL 78, pp. 517-23. Turnhout, Belgium: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1958. Cl. 0597.

John Chrysostom. "In Joannem (homiliae 1-88)." In *Opera omnia.* Edited by J.-P. Migne. PG 59, cols. 23-482. Paris: Migne, 1862. TLG 2062.153.

John of Damascus. "Expositio fidei." In *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. 2, pp. 3-239. Edited by B. Kotter. PTS 12. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973. TLG 2934.004.

Justin Martyr. "Apologia." In *Die ältesten Apologeten*, pp. 26-77. Edited by E. J. Goodspeed. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915. TLG 0645.001.

———. "Dialogus cum Tryphone" In *Die ältesten Apologeten*, pp. 90-265. Edited by E.J. Goodspeed. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915. TLG 0645.003.

Lactantius. "Divinae Institutiones." In *L. Caeli Firmiani Lactanti Opera omnia*. Edited by Samuel Brandt. CSEL 19, pp. 1-672. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1890. Cl. 0085.

———. "Epitome divinarum institutionum." In *L. Caeli Firmiani Lactanti Opera omnia*. Edited by Samuel Brandt. CSEL 19, pp. 673-761. Vienna, Austria: F. Tempsky; Leipzig, Germany: G. Freytag, 1890. Cl. 0086.

Leo the Great. *Tractatus septem et nonaginta*. In *Léon le Grand: Sermons* 3. 2nd ed. Edited by René Dolle. SC 74. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976. Cl. 1657.

Maximus of Turin. *Sermones*. Edited by A. Mutzenbecher. CCL 23. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1962. Cl. 0219 a.

Maximus the Confessor. "Diversa capita ad theologiam et oeconomiam spectantia." In *Opera omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. PG 90, cols. 1185-462. Paris: Migne, 1860.

———. "Quaestiones ad Thalassium." In *Opera omnia*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. PG 90, cols. 244-785. Paris: Migne, 1860. TLG 1892.001.

Melito of Sardis. "De Pascha." In *Sur la pâque: et fragments*. Edited by Othmar Perler. SC 123, pp. 60-127.

Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966. TLG 1495.001.
Methodius. "Ex libro de creatis excerpta." In *Opera omnia*. PG 18, cols. 331-44. Edited by J.-P. Migne Paris: Migne, 1857.
Novatian. "De Trinitate." In *Opera*. Edited by G. F. Diercks. CCL 4, pp. 11-78. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1972. Cl. 0071.
"O Oriens Antiphon of Advent." In *HBM*, p. 93. Edited by Matthew Britt. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1924.
Origen. "Contra Celsum." In *Origène Contre Celse*. Edited by M. Borret. SC 132, 136, 147 and 150. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967-1969. TLG 2042.001.
———. "Commentaria in evangelium secundum Matthaeum." In *Opera omnia*. PG 13, cols. 829-1600. Edited by J.-P. Migne Paris: Migne, 1862. TLG 2042.029.
———. "Commentarii in evangelium Joannis (lib. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 13)." In *Origene. Commentaire sur saint Jean*, 3 vols. Edited by Cécil Blanc. SC 120, 157, 222. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1966-1975. TLG 2042.005.
———. "De principiis." In *Origenes vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*, pp. 462-560, 668-764. Edited by Herwig Görgemanns and Heinrich Karpp. Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976. TLG 2042.002.
———. "Dialogus cum Heraclide." In *Entretien d'Origene avec Héraclide*. Edited by J. Scherer. SC 67, pp. 52-110. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1960. TLG 2042.018.
———. "Epistula ad Gregorium Thaumaturgum (e Philocalia)." In *GTDO*, pp. 40-44. Edited by P. Koetschau. Freiburg: Mohr, 1894. TLG 2042.033.
———. "Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis (in catenis)." In *Origenes Werke*. Vol. 4. Edited by E. Preuschen. GCS 10, pp. 483-574. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903. TLG 2042.006.
———. "Fragmenta in Jeremiam (in catenis)." In *Origenes Werke*. Vol. 3. Edited by Erich Klostermann. GCS 6, pp. 199-232. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901. TLG 2042.010.
———. "In Jeremiam [homiliae 12-20]." In *Origenes Werke*. Vol. 3. Edited by Erich Klostermann. GCS 6, pp. 85-194. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1901. TLG 2042.021.
———. "In Numeros homiliae." In *Origenes Werke*. Vol. 7. Edited by W. A. Baehrens. GCS 30, pp. 3-285. Leipzig: Teubner, 1921. Cl. 0198 0.
Peter Chrysologus. *Collectio sermonum a Felice episcopo parata sermonibus extravagantibus adjectis*, 3 vols. In *Sancti Petri Chrysologi*. Edited by Alexander Olivar. CCL 24, 24A and 24B. Turnhout: Brepols, 1975-1982. Cl. 0227+.
Philoxenus of Mabbug. "On the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit." *See* " 'Memra' de Philoxène de Mabboug sur l'inhabitation du Saint Esprit" Translated by A. Tanghe. *Le Muséon* 73 (1960): 39-71.
Prudentius. "Liber cathemerinon." In *Clementis carmina*. Edited by Johan Bergman. CSEL 61, pp. 5-76. Vienna, Austria: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1926. Cl. 1438.
Pseudo-Athanasius. "Oratio quarta contra Arianos." In *Die pseudoathanasianische "IVte Rede gegen die Arianer" als "*κατὰ ᾿Αρειανῶν λόγος*" ein Apollinarisgut*, pp. 43-87. Edited by A. Stegmann. Rottenburg: Bader, 1917. TLG 2035.117.
Pseudo-Dionysius. "De caelestine hierarchia." In *Denys l'Aréopagite: La hiérarchie célestse*. Edited by R. Roques, G. Heil and M. de Gandillac. SC 58, pp. 70-225. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1958. Reprint, 1970. TLG 2798.001.
Romanus Melodus. "Cantica." In *Romanos le Mélode: Hymnes*. Edited by J. Grosdidier de Matons. SC 99, 110, 114, 128, 283. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1964-1981. TLG 2881.001.
Sahdona. "Book of Perfection." In *Martyrius (Sahdona): Oeuvres spirituelles*, part 2. Edited by André de Halleux. CSCO 252 (Scriptores Syri 110). Louvain, Belgium: Secrétariat du Corpus, 1965.

Tertullian. "Adversus Marcionem." In *Opera*, vol. 1. Edited by E. Kroymann. CCL 1, pp. 437-726. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0014.

———. "Adversus Praxean." In *Tertulliani opera*. Edited by E. Kroymann and E. Evans. CCL 2, pp. 1159-205. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0026.

———. "De baptismo." In *Tertulliani opera*. Edited by J. G. Ph. Borleffs. CCL 1, pp. 277-95. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0008.

———. "De carne Christi." In *Opera*. Edited by E. Kroymann. CCL 2, pp. 871-917. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0018.

———. "De cultu feminarum." In *Tertulliani opera*. Edited by E. Kroymann. CCL 1, pp. 343-70. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0011.

———. "De fuga in persecutione." In *Tertulliani opera*. Edited by J. J. Thierry. CCL 2, pp. 1135-55. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0025.

———. "De oratione." In *Tertulliani opera*. Edited by G. F. Diercks. CCL 1, pp. 255-74. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0007.

———. "De praescriptione haereticorum." In *Tertulliani opera*. Edited by R. F. Refoulé. CCL 1, pp. 187-224. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0005.

———. "De resurrectione mortuorum." In *Opera*. Edited by J. G. Ph. Borleffs. CCL 2, pp. 919-1012. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1954. Cl. 0019.

Theodore of Heraclea. "Fragmeta in Johannem." In *JKGK*, pp. 65-176. Texte und Untersuchungen 89. Edited by Joseph Reuss. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966.

Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Commentarius in evangelium Johannis Apostoli*. 2 vols. Edited by Jacques Marie Vosté. CSCO 115-16, Scriptores Syri 4 3. Paris: Typographeo Reipublicae, 1940.

———. "Fragmenta graeca." In *Essai sur Théodore de Mopsueste*. Edited by Robert Devreesse. Studi e testi 141, pp. 305-419. Citta del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, 1948.

Theodoret of Cyr. "Compendium haereticarum fabularum." In *Opera omnia*. PG 83, cols. 336-556. Edited by J.-P. Migne Paris: Migne, 1860. TLG 4089.031.

———. "Eranistes." Pages 61-266 In *Theodoret of Cyrus: Eranistes*. Edited by G. H. Ettlinger. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975. TLG 4089.002.

Bibliography of Works in English Translation

Abraham of Nathpar. "On Prayer and Silence." In *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life*, pp. 187-96. Translated by Sebastian Brock. CS 101. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1987.

Ambrose. *Hexameron, Paradise, and Cain and Abel*. Translated by John J. Savage. FC 42. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1961.

———. *Letters*. Translated by Mary Melchior Beyenka. FC 26. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1954.

———. *Select Works and Letters*. Translated by H. De Romestin. NPNF 10. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. *Seven Exegetical Works*. Translated by Michael P. McHugh. FC 65. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1972.

———. *Theological and Dogmatic Works*. Translated by Roy J. Deferrari. FC 44. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963.

Andrew of Crete. "Homily on the Exaltation of the Venerable Cross." In *JFA*, pp. 156-57. Edited by Edith Barnecut. New York: New City Press, 1992.

Athanasius. *Selected Works and Letters*. Translated by Archibald Robertson. NPNF 4. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

Augustine. *Anti-Pelagian Writings*. Translated by Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis. NPNF 5. Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886-1889. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. "City of God." In *City of God, Christian Doctrine*, pp. 1-511. Translated by Marcus Dods. NPNF 2. Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886-1889. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. "Confessions." In *The Confessions and Letters of Augustin, with a Sketch of His Life and Work*, pp. 27-207. Translated by J. G. Pilkington. NPNF 1. Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886-1889. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. *Eighty-three Different Questions*. Translated by David L. Mosher. FC 70. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982.

———. "Homilies on the Gospel of John." In *Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*, pp. 7-452. Translated by John Gibb and James Innes. NPNF 7. Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886-1889. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. *Letters*. Translated by Sister Wilfrid Parsons. FC 12 and 30. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1951-1955.

———. "On Adulterous Marriages." In *Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*, pp. 53-132. Translated by Charles T. Huegelmeyer. FC 27. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1955.

———. "On Nature and Grace." In *Four Anti-Pelagian Writings: On Nature and Grace, On the Preceedings of Pelagius, On the Predestination of the Saints, On the Gift of Perseverance*, pp. 22-90. Translated by John A. Mourant and William J. Collinge. FC 86. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992.

———. *On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*. Translated by Arthur West Haddan et al.

NPNF 3. Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886-1889. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. *Saint Augustine*. Translated by John Courtney Murray. FC 2. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947.

———. *Sermon on the Mount, Harmony of the Gospels, Homilies on the Gospels*. Translated by William Findlay, S. D. F. Salmond and R. G. MacMullen. NPNF 6. Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886-1889. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. *Sermons*. Translated by Edmund Hill. WSA 1-11. Part 3. Edited by John E. Rotelle. New York: New City Press, 1990-1997.

———. "The Literal Meaning of Genesis." In *On Genesis*, pp. 168-506. Translated by Edmund Hill. *WSA* 1 13. Edited by John E. Rotelle. New York: New City Press, 2002.

———. *The Trinity*. Translated by Stephen McKenna. FC 45. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1962.

———. *Tractates on the Gospel of John,1-10*. Translated by John W. Rettig. FC 78. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988.

Basil of Seleucia. *Homilies*. In *JFB*, pp. 46-47, 54-55, 72-73. Edited by Edith Barnecut. New York: New City Press, 1993.

Basil the Great. "Concerning Baptism." In *Ascetical Works*, pp. 339-430. Translated by M. Monica Wagner. FC 9. New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1950.

———. "Homily on Christ's Ancestry." In *JFC*, pp. 24-25. Edited by Edith Barnecut. New York: New City Press, 1994.

———. *Letters and Select Works*. Translated by Blomfield Jackson. NPNF 8. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886-1889. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. *On the Holy Spirit*. Translated by D. Anderson, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Press, 1980.

Bede. "Commentary on 1 John." In *Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles*, pp. 159-229. Translated by David Hurst. CS 82. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1985.

———. *Homilies on the Gospels*. Translated by Lawrence T. Martin and David Hurst. 2 vols. CS 110 and 111. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1991.

Caesarius of Arles. *Sermons 81-186*. Translated by Mary Magdeleine Mueller. FC 47. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964.

John Chrysostom. "Homilies on the Gospel of John." In *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint John and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 1-334. Translated by Philip Schaff. NPNF 14. Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886-1889. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

Clement of Alexandria. "Christ the Educator." In *JFA*, pp. 62-63. Edited by Edith Barnecut. New York: New City Press, 1992.

———. *Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria*. Translated by F. Crombie et al. ANF 2. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

"Constitutions of the Holy Apostles." In *Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Dionysius, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, 2 Clement, Early Liturgies*, pp. 385-508. Edited by James Donaldson. ANF 7. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

Cosmas of Maiuma. Kanon for the Fifth Day of Great Week. In *The Eucharist*, pp. 385-92. Translated by Daniel J. Sheerin. MFC 7. Edited by Thomas Halton. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1986.

Cyprian. *Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian*. Arranged by A. Cleveland Coxe. ANF 5. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson,

1994.
———. "The Unity of the Church." In *Treatises*, pp. 91-121. Translated by Roy J. Deferrari. FC 36. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1958.
Cyril of Alexandria. *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Vols. 1-2. Translated by Philip Edward Pusey and Thomas Randell. LF 43, LF 48. Edited by Henry Parry Liddon. London: Rivingtons; Oxford: James Parker, 1874-1885.
———. "Letter 4, to Nestorius." In *The Seven Ecumenical Councils*, pp. 197-98. Edited by Henry R. Percival. NPNF 14. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff. 14 vols. 1886-1889. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
———. "Meditation on the Mystical Supper." In *SSGF* 3, pp.154-61. Translated by M. F. Toal. Swedesboro, N.J.: Preservation Press, 1996.
Cyril of Jerusalem. "Catechetical Lectures." In *S. Cyril of Jerusalem, S. Gregory Nazianzen*, pp. 1-202. Translated by Edward Hamilton Gifford et al. NPNF 7. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
———. "Mystagogical Lectures." In *DECT*, pp. 188-93. Translated and edited by Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
Didache. In *AF*, pp. 251-69. Translated by J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer. Edited by M. W. Holmes. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1989.
Dionysius of Alexandria. "Fragments." In *Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius the Great, Julius Africanus, Anatolius and Minor Writers, Methodius, Arnobius*, pp. 81-120. Translated by S. D. F. Salmond. ANF 6. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
Ephrem the Syrian. *Commentary on Tatian's Distessaron*. See *ECTD*. Translated and edited by C. McCarthy. Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the University of Manchester, 1993.
———. *Hymns*. Translated and introduced by Kathleen E. McVey. Preface by John Meyendorff. Classics in Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1989.
———. "Memra for the Fifth Day of Great Week (Holy Thursday)." In *The Eucharist*, 137-43. Translated by Daniel J. Sheerin. MFC 7. Edited by Thomas Halton. Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1986.
Eusebius of Caesarea. "Church History." In *Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine*, pp. 73-403. Translated by Arthur Cushman McGiffert. NPNF 1. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
———. *Proof of the Gospel*. 2 vols. Translated by W. J. Ferrar. London: SPCK, 1920. Reprint, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1981.
Evagrius of Pontus. "Chapters on Prayer." In *TP* 1, pp 53-71. Translated and edited by G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware. 4 vols. London: Farber and Farber, 1979-1995.
"Gloss on John." In *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels Collected out of the Works of the Fathers*, by St. Thomas Aquinas. 6 vols. New ed. Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1874.
Gregory of Nazianzus. "Orations." In *Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus*, pp. 203-434. Translated by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow. NPNF 7. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
———. "Poem." In *JFA*, pp. 74-75. Edited by Edith Barnecut. New York: New City Press, 1992.
Gregory of Nyssa. "Homilies on the Song of Songs." In *FGTG*, 158-59. Translated and edited by Jean Daniélou and Herbert Musurillo. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961. Reprint, Crestwood,

N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979.
———. *Select Writings and Letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa*, pp. 33-248. Translated by William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson. NPNF 5. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
Gregory the Great. *Forty Gospel Homilies*. Translated by David Hurst. CS 123. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian, 1990.
———. "Letters." In *Gregory the Great, Ephraim Syrus, Aphraha*, pp. 1-111. Translated by James Barmby. NPNF 13. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
———. *Morals on the Book of Job*. Translated by Members of the English Church. 4 vols. LF 18, 21, 23 and 31. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1844-1850.
Heracleon. "Commentary on the Gospel of John." See *Origen: Commentary on the Gosepl According to John, Books 13-32*. Translated by Ronald E. Heine. FC 89. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993.
Hilary of Poitiers. "On Matthew." In *SSGF* 2, pp. 119-21. Translated and edited by M. F. Toal. Swedesboro, N.J.: Preservation Press, 1996.
———. "Select Works." In *Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*. Translated by E. W. Wastson et. al. NPNF 9. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
Hippolytus. "Against Noetus." In *Heythrop Monographs*. Edited by Michael J. Walsh. London: Heythrop Monographs, 1976.
Ignatius of Antioch. "Epistle to the Ephesians." In *The Letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch*, p. 81-143. Translated by Gerald G. Walsh. FC 1. New York: Christian Heritage, 1947.
———. "Epistle to the Philadelphians." In *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, pp. 116-19. Translated by A. Cleveland Coxe. ANF 1. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
———. "Epistle to the Romans." In *AF*, pp. 75-79. Translated by J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer. Edited by M. W. Holmes. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1989.
Irenaeus. "Against Heresies." In *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, pp. 309-567. Translated by A. Cleveland Coxe. ANF 1. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
Isaac of Nineveh. *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh*. Translated from Bedjan's Syriac text with an introduction and registers by A. J. Wensinck. Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, Afdelling Letterkunde. Nieuwe reeks. Dl. 23. no. 1. Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen: Amsterdam, 1923. Reprint, Wiesbaden: M. Sändig oHG, 1969).
Isaiah of Scete. "On Guarding the Intellect." In *TP* 1, pp 22-28. Translated and edited by G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware. 4 vols. London: Farber and Farber, 1979-1995.
Jerome. "Homily 87, on John 1:1-14." In *Homilies 60-96*, pp. 212-20. Translated by Sister Marie Liguori Ewald. FC 57. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1966.
———. *Letters and Select Works*. Translated by W.H. Fremantle. NPNF 6. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
———. "The Dialogue Against the Pelagians." In *Dogmatic and Polemical Works*, pp. 221-378. Translated by John N. Hritzu. FC 53. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1965.
John of Damascus. "An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith." In *Writings*, pp. 165-406. Translated by Frederic H. Chase. FC 37. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1958.
Justin Martyr. *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*. Arranged by A. Cleveland Coxe. ANF

1. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

Lactantius. "The Epitome of the Divine Institutes." In *Lactantius, Venantius, Asterius, Victorinus, Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions, 2 Clement, Early Liturgies*, pp. 224-255. Translated by William Fletcher. ANF 7. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———.*The Divine Institutes: Books I-VII*. Translated by Sister Mary Francis McDonald. FC 49. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964.

Leo the Great. *Sermons*. Translated by Jane Freeland et. al. FC 93. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996.

Maximus of Turin. "Sermon 23." In *JFC*, pp.72-73. Edited by Edith Barnecut. New York: New City Press, 1994.

———. *The Sermons of St. Maximus of Turin*. Translated and annotated by Boniface Ramsey. ACW 50. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1989.

Maximus the Confessor. "Chapters on Knowledge." In *MCSW*, pp. 127-80. Translated by George C. Berthold with Jaroslav Pelikan and Irénée-Henri Dalmais. The Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

Melito of Sardis. *On Pascha: With the Fragments of Melito and Other Material Related to the Quartodecimans*. Translated by Alistair Stewart-Sykes. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001.

Methodius. "Extracts from the Work on Things Created." In *Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius the Great, Julius Africanus, Anatolius and Minor Writers, Methodius, Arnobius*, pp. 379-81. Translated by William R. Clark. ANF 6. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

Novatian. "Treatise Concerning the Trinity." In *Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Caius, Novatian, Appendix*," pp. 611-44. Translated by Robert Ernest Wallis. ANF 5. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

O Oriens Antiphon of Advent." In *HBM*, p. 93. Edited by Matthew Britt. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1924.

Origen. "Commentary on Matthew 11." In *SSGF* 2, pp. 109-12.Translated and edited by M. F. Toal. Swedesboro, N.J.: Preservation Press, 1996.

———. *Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Books 1-10 and 13-32*. Translated by Ronald E. Heine. FC 80 and 89. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989-1993.

———. "Dialogue with Heraclides 1-4." In *DECT*, pp. 23-26. Translated by Henry Chadwick. Edited by Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

———. "Fragments on the Gospel of John." In *AEG* 2, pp. 1-141 passim; *AEG* 4, pp. 1-19, 164-98 passim. Translated by Harold Smith. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1926-1928.

———. "Homilies on Numbers 12.1." In *AEG* 3, p. 263. Translated by Harold Smith. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1927.

———. *Homilies on Jeremiah, Homily on 1 Kings 28*. Translated by John Clark Smith. FC 97. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998.

———. *Tertullian (IV); Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen (I and III)*. Translated by Frederick Combie. ANF 4. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

Peter Chrysologus. *Saint Peter Chrysologus: Selected Sermons and Saint Valerian: Homilies*, pp. 1-282. Translated by George E. Ganss. FC 17. New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1953.

Philoxenus of Mabbug. "On the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit." In *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life*, pp. 106-27. Translated by Sebastian Brock. CS 101. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1987.

Prudentius. "Hymns for Every Day." In *The Poems of Prudentius*, pp. 1-92. Translated by M. Clement Eagan. FC 43. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1962.

———. "Cathemerinon 9." In *ECLP*, pp. 82-86. Translated by Carolinne White. London: Routledge, 2000.

Pseudo-Athanasius. "Fourth Discourse Against the Arians." In *Selected Works and Letters*, pp. 433-47. Translated by Archibald Robertson. NPNF 4. Series 2. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. 14 vols. 1886-1900. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

Pseudo-Dionysius. "Celestial Hierarchy." In *PDCW*, pp. 143-91. Translated by Colm Luibheid. The Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1987.

Romanus Melodus. *Kontakia of Romanos, Byzantine Melodist*. 2 vols. Translated and edited by Marjorie Carpenter. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1970-1973.

Sahdona. "Book of Perfection." In *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life*, pp. 202-37. Translated by Sebastian Brock. CS 101. Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1987.

Tertullian. *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*. Arragned by A. Cleveland Coxe. ANF 3. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. "Tertullian." In *Tertullian (IV); Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen (I and III)*, pp. 5-166. Translated by S. Thelwall. ANF 4. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

———. *Tertullian's Treatis Against Praxeas*. Edited by Ernest Evans. London: SPCK, 1948.

———. *Tertullian's Treatise on the Resurrection*.Translated and edited by Ernest Evans, with an Introduction and Commentary. London: SPCK, 1960.

Theodore of Mopsuestia. *Theodore of Mopsuestia: Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Introduced and translated by George Kalantzis. ECS 7. Strathford, Australia: St. Pauls Publications, 2004.

Theodoret of Cyr. *Eranistes*. Translated by Gerard H. Ettlinger. FC 106. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003.

A Treatise on Re-baptism. In *Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyrpian, Caius, Novatian, Appendix*, pp. 665-78. Arranged by A. Cleveland Coxe. ANF 5. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. 1885-1887. Reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.

Authors/Writings Index

Subject Index

Scripture Index

About the Editor



The **Rev. Dr. Joel C. Elowsky** (PhD, Drew University) is associate professor of historical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He has served as the operations manager for the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture and has edited the two volumes on John's Gospel in that series. He is the volume editor for *We Believe in the Holy Spirit* in the Ancient Christian Doctrine series and has edited volumes on Theodore of Mopsuestia and Cyril of Alexandria in the Ancient Christian Texts series.

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture

Genesis 1–11

Genesis 12–50

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel

1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Job

Psalms 1–50

Psalms 51–150

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon

Isaiah 1–39

Isaiah 40–66

Jeremiah, Lamentations

Ezekiel, Daniel

The Twelve Prophets

Apocrypha

Matthew 1–13

Matthew 14–28

Mark

Luke

John 1–10

John 11–21

Acts

Romans

1-2 Corinthians

Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians

Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

Hebrews

James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude

Revelation